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Eagles' Donovan McNabb

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Flu vaccination crisis eases on Pacific bases

Yokosuka, Misawa officials say more shots now available

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JASON T. POPLIN/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

All hands

Airman Landon Rowe of Zephyr Hills, S.C., right, works with fellow sailors to raise an emergency barricade during a flight-deck drill aboard the USS Kitty Hawk. The aircraft carrier currently is conducting sea trials in the western Pacific Ocean.

aboard the USS Kitty Hawk. The aircraft carrier currently is conducting sea trials in the western Pacific Ocean

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Yates decision: False testimony from the state's expert witness in a former nurse's capital murder trial was a basis by one juror for convicting the woman of drowning her children in the family bathtub.

Juror Ron Jones wrote the judge in Andrea Yates' case that he had decided she was insane, but changed his mind based on testimony by psychiatrist Park Dietz about an episode of the television show "Law & Order" where a woman was found innocent by reason of insanity for drowning her children.

No such episode existed.

Earlier this month, a Texas appeals court threw out Yates' convictions in three of her five children's drownings because testimony from Dietz was false and the trial judge had denied a request by defense attorneys to declare a mistrial after it was learned that Dietz's testimony was false.

Train gas leak: A week after chlorine gas leaked from a train wreck and killed nine people in Columbia, S.C., officials will let about half the 5,400 residents displaced by the accident return home Thursday morning.

Air quality tests show chlorine has returned to normal levels on the edges of the evacuation area, which extended a mile from the crash site, according to the Aiken County Sheriff's Office.

Conditions remain too dangerous to allow people back into homes and businesses closer to the crash site, near the Georgia line and about 60 miles southwest of Columbia.

Transplant baby: The judge in the Michael Jackson child-molestation case has held that a hearing about allegations of past sexual misconduct by the singer will not be held behind closed doors.

The ruling in Santa Maria, Calif., on Wednesday by Superior Court Judge Rodney Melville was a victory for the news media and the prosecution, which both opposed a defense motion to hold a hearing on the issue away from reporters.

World

N. Korea nuclear talks: South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun said Thursday he expected six-party talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear weapons programs to resume after the inauguration of President Bush.

Meanwhile, a U.S. Congressional delegation met North Korea's No. 2 leader Kim

Yong Nam in Pyongyang in an effort to persuade the communist regime to rejoin the talks.

Transplant baby: A 1-year-old girl who underwent an eight-organ transplant in Miami last year has died in a hospital in northern Italy, officials said Thursday.

Alessia Di Matteo died Wednesday at the Istituto Giannina Gaslini hospital in her hometown of Genoa. Officials there said the cause of death was not immediately clear. Di Matteo's condition was already extremely serious when she was transferred to the hospital from the United States last month.

Di Matteo was born with congenital smooth muscle disorder, which prevented normal function of her stomach, intestines and kidneys. The condition is fatal if left untreated.

Nazi victims' accounts: Records of more than 3,000 World War II-era Swiss bank accounts were published on the Internet Thursday as part of an effort to return hundreds of millions of dollars to Nazi victims or their descendants.

The publication was the result of a settlement reached in June between the banks and Nazi victims.

The banks' refusal to release the records had angered Holocaust survivors and infuriated a federal judge overseeing the case.

The list of names was posted to the Web site of the tribunal overseeing the distribution of the funds — www.crt-il.org.

Pinochet bail: A Chile appeals court on Wednesday approved freedom on bail for former dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet, who has been under house arrest pending trial for nine kidnappings and one homicide during his long regime.

The Santiago Court of Appeals' ruling confirmed a lower court judgment for bail earlier this week.

Pinochet's chief defense lawyer, Pablo Rodriguez, asked the court to lower the \$3,500 amount, court refused. Pinochet has been under house arrest for one week.

Rabin's assassin: The assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will be punished for having physical contact in his cell with the woman he says he has married, a prison spokeswoman said Thursday.



Garage shooting: David Lynn Jordan is escorted by officers from the Madison County Sheriff's Department in Jackson City Court on Wednesday in Jackson, Tenn. Judge Blake Anderson ordered Jordan, the suspect in a shooting rampage at a state maintenance garage, jailed without bond on three counts of first-degree murder and two charges of attempted first-degree murder.

The woman, Larisa Trimbobler, kissed Yigal Amir on the cheek during a visit Thursday. Prison Service spokeswoman Orli Stelzer said.

Amir returned the kiss and the two started hugging and fondling each other before a prison warden intervened, Stelzer said.

Business

US Airways finances: US Airways will have the cash it needs to keep flying through June after a bankruptcy judge approved a deal Thursday between the struggling airline and the federal Air Transportation Stabilization Board.

An interim financing deal had been set to expire Saturday, but U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Stephen Mitchell gave his blessing to an extension through June 30.

By then, the airline, the nation's seventh-biggest carrier, hopes it will have found a new investor to provide hundreds of millions of dollars needed to emerge from bankruptcy protection.

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Flu shot eligibility eases at some bases

Okinawa, Yokosuka open vaccine to all; restrictions vary elsewhere

By DAVID ALLEN
Stars and Stripes

Restrictions on the flu vaccine, prompted by shortages earlier in the flu season, are easing as before — but not all — U.S. military facilities in the Pacific.

The U.S. Naval Hospital at Camp Lester, Okinawa, for instance, has opened its flu vaccine stock to all comers. "Service members and their families on Okinawa who have not previously been vaccinated against the flu this season may now receive the shot," said hospital spokeswoman Amanda Woodhead. "New guidance released earlier this month directed medical treatment facilities to open the vaccination for all healthy beneficiaries over the age of 5 regardless of previous restrictions."

That is, as long as enough vaccine is on hand.

At Yokota Air Base, Japan, for example, medical personnel have about 760 doses remaining, enough only for high-risk groups and mission-essential active-duty service members, said Col. Steven Shaffer, the 374th Medical Group's director of organizational compliance.

Shots also are being given to those who routinely interact with anyone at risk, he said, as well as aircrew members who travel through multiple geographic areas, deploying troops and other mission-critical personnel — including those in security forces, fire, the 5th Air Force, U.S. Forces Japan, operational support and aircraft maintenance.

"We don't have enough to vaccinate everyone," Shaffer said, adding that Pacific Air Forces officials have not yet indicated whether additional vaccine supplies are being shipped to Yokota this winter. "We cannot vaccinate the total force here because we have not received any more vaccine."

However, at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Yokosuka, Japan, a spokeswoman said Thursday that the flu vaccine now is available for people not listed in high-risk groups. The immunization clinic is open from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Wednesdays and from 8 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 3:30 p.m. other weekdays.

At Misawa Air Base, Japan, the 35th Medical Group has opened flu vaccine availability to all active-duty military members and people 50 and older, said Staff Sgt. Rebekah Virtue of the hospital's immunization clinic. She said the base has about 800 doses of the vaccine left.

In South Korea, a spokesman said military personnel, civilians over 50, children 4 and younger and people in close contact with those in all medical high-risk groups are eligible for the shots.

An Osan Air Base official said more supplies may be added to the eligible list as supplies become available.

Typically, the flu season peak can occur anywhere from late December through March. In October — after the vaccine manufacturer notified the Centers for Disease Control that it wouldn't be able to deliver up to 48 million doses of the vaccine — the CDC issued an alert calling for healthy people to skip their shots this year and recommended doctors and other providers give shots only to people at greatest risk.

The shortage since has abated. California, for example, recently lifted all restrictions on who should receive the shots.

On Okinawa, Navy Commander Stanley J. Joseph, director for Community Health, said the hospital and branch clinics will begin offering the vaccination starting Jan. 17.

"We are very much still in the flu season



AMANDA M. WOODHEAD/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Nurse Maruja E. Johnson vaccinates 15-month-old Jordyn G. Graham while mother Christine consoles her at the immunization clinic at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Okinawa. The hospital now has enough vaccine for everyone, officials said.

and would like to immunize the remaining population to prevent an influenza outbreak here on Okinawa," he said. "This includes in-home child care providers and those with small children or elderly in the household."

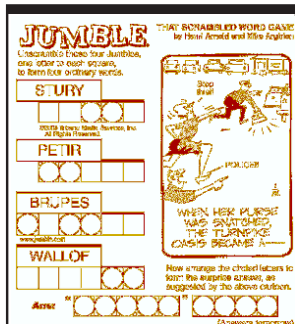
So far, the hospital and clinics have given 17,970 vaccinations on Okinawa to individuals identified to be at greatest risk, he said, but "we are now able to offer the shot to anyone despite age or health conditions."

Those considered most vulnerable, Woodhead said, include children ages 6-23 months, adults over 50, people ages 2-64

with chronic medical conditions, women expected to be pregnant during the influenza season, residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities, children ages 18 and under on chronic aspirin therapy and out-of-home caregivers or household contacts of infants under 6 months.

Okinawa personnel wanting flu shots must contact their primary health care clinic or stop by the immunizations clinic on the first floor of Camp Lester's Naval Hospital. Further information for Okinawa base residents is available at 643-7441.

Franklin Fisher, Teri Weaver, Vince Little, and Jennifer Swan contributed to this report. E-mail David Allen at: allenjd@stripes.osd.mil



Tips to stay flu-free without a vaccination

CAMP LESTER, Okinawa — While getting a flu shot is the best protection against infection, the U.S. Naval Hospital here suggests a few additional ways people can protect themselves against the flu:

■ **Wash your hands:** Most cold and flu viruses are spread by direct contact, so wash your hands often. If no sink is available, rub your hands together very hard for a minute or so, which also helps break up most of the germs. Alternatively, carry an antibacterial instant hand sanitizer that doesn't require water.

■ **Avoid close contact:** Avoid close contact with sick people. When you are sick, stay home and keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick.

■ **Don't cover your sneezes and coughs with your hands:** Germs and viruses cling to your bare hands. Muffling coughs and sneezes with your hands results in passing along your germs to others. When you feel a sneeze or cough coming, use a tissue, and then throw it away immediately. If you don't have a tissue, turn your head away from people near you and cough into the air.

■ **Drink plenty of fluids:** Water

flushes your system, washing out the poisons as it rehydrates you. A typical, healthy adult requires eight 8-ounce glasses of fluids each day.

■ **Take a sauna:** Researchers are not clear about the exact role saunas play in prevention but one 1989 German study found that people who steamed twice a week got half as many colds as those who did not.

■ **Get some fresh air:** A regular dose of fresh air is important, especially in cold weather when central heating dries you out and makes your body more vulnerable.

■ **Exercise regularly:** Aerobic exercise speeds up the heart to pump larger quantities of blood, makes you breathe faster to help transfer oxygen from your lungs to your blood and makes you sweat once your body heats up. These exercises help increase the body's natural virus killing cells.

■ **Eat foods containing phytochemicals:** "Phyto" means plants, and the natural chemicals in plants give the vitamins in food a supercharged boost. Eat dark green, red, and yellow vegetables and fruits to increase your phytochemical level.

■ **Eat yogurt:** Some studies have shown that eating a daily cup of

low-fat yogurt can reduce susceptibility to colds by 25 percent. Researchers believe the beneficial bacteria in yogurt may stimulate production of immune system substances that fight disease.

■ **Don't smoke:** Statistics show that heavy smokers get more severe colds and more frequent ones. Even being around smoke profoundly zaps the immune system.

■ **Cut alcohol consumption:** Heavy alcohol use destroys the liver, the body's primary filtering system, meaning that germs of all kinds won't leave your body as fast. As a result, heavier drinkers are more prone to initial infections as well as secondary complications. Alcohol also dehydrates the body — it actually takes more fluids from your system than it puts in.

■ **Relax:** If you can teach yourself to relax, you can, over time, be able to activate your immune system on demand. Evidence exists that when you put your relaxation skills into action, your interleukins — leaders in the immune system response against cold and flu viruses — increase in the bloodstream. Train yourself to picture an image you find pleasant or calming. Do this 30 minutes a day for several months.

— Staff reports

Correction

The Jumble puzzle in Wednesday's edition contained multiple errors because of a production error. The number of squares did not match the number of letters for clues three and four. Each of those clues should have six squares. The answer is WREST STOP.

Air Force losing top leaders, Pentagon says

By Robert Burns

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Air Force's top weapons-buying official said Wednesday his service is suffering from a leadership vacuum, and he predicted a further exodus of senior officials in the fallout from a feud with Congress over a proposed plane leasing deal with Boeing Co.

Marvin Sambur, the assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition, told a group of reporters that the Air Force is feeling the effects of low morale as a re-

Senior staff leaving in fallout over Boeing deal

sult of the conflict, which centers on claims that senior Air Force officials pushed for a sweetheart deal for Boeing.

"There's a vacuum in several positions with three-star generals, two-star generals — nobody's getting confirmed," Sambur said.

In October, Air Force Gen. Gregory Martin withdrew his nomination to be the next commander of U.S. Pacific Command after he came under fire for the Boeing deal during a confirmation hear-

ing. Air Force Secretary James Roche is stepping down next week with no replacement yet nominated. Peter Teets, the Air Force undersecretary and director of the National Reconnaissance Office, will take over as the senior Air Force civilian until a new secretary is confirmed.

Sambur also is quitting. "There are many people who are lining up to leave," Sambur said, adding that some of the Air

Force's most important organizations, including Air Combat Command, are being affected.

Lt. Gen. Ronald E. Keys has been nominated to take command of Air Combat Command, but the Senate has not yet confirmed him. Keys would replace Lt. Gen. Bruce A. Wright, who has been nominated by the Senate to take command of U.S. Forces Japan and Pacific Air Forces.

The Air Force official who nego-

tiated the original aerial tanker leasing deal with Boeing, Darleen Druyun, pleaded guilty in federal court last year to conspiracy. She began serving a nine-month prison sentence in Florida this month. Druyun admitted that she began job talks with Boeing while she was overseeing negotiations on the tanker deal.

The \$2.2 billion tanker contract has since been nullified, and the Pentagon has asked Congress to investigate a wide range of contracts in which Druyun was involved.

Associated Press writer Matthew Daly contributed to this story.

Guard testifies in defense of Graner

By T.A. Badger

The Associated Press

FORT HOOD, Texas — A former guard at Abu Ghraib prison testified Thursday that intelligence officers wanted detainees roughed up there, and that Spc. Charles Graner at one point took part in a number of the abuses he is accused of committing.

But the defense witness, former Spc. Megan Ambuhl, admitted under cross-examination that she had had a brief sexual relationship with Graner and remains a close friend.

"And you don't want your friend to go to jail?" asked Maj. Michael Holley, the prosecutor.

"No, sir," she answered. Ambuhl, who made a plea deal with prosecutors regarding her own actions at Abu Ghraib, also said she lied to investigators who sought to search her personal computer for photos and other evidence of abuse.

Graner, 36, is the first soldier to be tried in the Abu Ghraib scandal and is alleged to be the ringleader of the abuse. He is accused of conspiracy to abuse detainees, assault, dereliction of duty and committing indecent acts, and faces up to 17½ years in prison if convicted.

The defense maintains that mili-



Army Spc. Charles Graner arrives for his court-martial at Fort Hood, Texas, on Thursday.

tary and civilian intelligence agents controlled Graner's area of Abu Ghraib, and that Graner had followed their orders to tell up prisoners for interrogation. Ambuhl testified that intelligence officers directed the prison's guards to rough up and sexually humiliate detainees, and that the guards were praised for their efforts.

On one occasion, she said, an intelligence officer known as Steve told guards to "break" a prisoner known as al-Qaida, who was believed to have valuable information.

"Steve told us that we were doing a good job and that breaking al-Qaida would save a lot of lives," she said.

Another time, she said, two military intelligence officers told Graner to physically abuse a prisoner in a shower.

Army setting stage for 46th annual Yama Sakura exercise in Hokkaido

By Vince Little

Stars and Stripes

More than 2,000 U.S. soldiers and Japan Self-Defense Forces personnel will head north to Hokkaido later this month to conduct the Yama Sakura bilateral training exercise.

The annual drill is to take place Jan. 25-31 at Camp Higashi-Chitose on Japan's northernmost island, headquarters of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's northern army. It's among the Pacific's largest command-post exercises.

Soldiers from U.S. Army Japan, 9th Theater Support Command and the 4th Cavalry, Wash.-based Corps will participate, said Staff Sgt. Neil Jones, a U.S. Army Japan spokesman. Members of the Georgia Air National Guard's 14th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment also are coming to the Far East.

The Japanese side will feature the Japan Ground Staff Office, JGSDF northern army, Japan Air Self-Defense Force and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.

Jones said U.S. Marines had committed to Yama Sakura but were called upon to assist in the earthquake and tsunami-relief missions under way in South Asia.

"The Marines unfortunately had to pull out of the exercise," he said. "However, the U.S. Army and the JGSDF look forward to moving ahead with Yama Sakura and expect it to be a successful and fruitful training exercise."

The 35th Supply and Service Battalion from Sagami Depot left for Camp Higashi-Chitose on Jan. 3 to begin site setup, said Capt. Dan Reichard, the unit's company commander. It must arrange all the support and communications to accommodate U.S. forces in the exercise.

"It takes us about three weeks to receive everyone and set up the service and life-support structure," Reichard said. "Site setup is the most time-consuming part of the entire exercise."

Through heavy coordination with Japanese officials, he said, the battalion assembles critical infrastructure such as billeting, dining, office space and transportation. Maintaining Internet access, phones, laundry, postal services and other morale boosters — including a makeshift gym, billiards and football tables — also are part of its responsibility.

"We bring it all — quite literally," Reichard said. Site and risk assessment is another of the supply and service team's key functions. Reichard said the camp's potential safety hazards must be gauged before Yama Sakura participants arrive.

"My Samurai protection column, soldiers within our battalion, will walk through all areas of the exercise to see what might be potential danger spots," he said. "For instance, it's very treacherous to walk on the ice up here. How are we going to reduce that? So we brought in saw and rubber crampons to help boots grip the ice. That's just one aspect."

Yama Sakura was designed to sharpen U.S.-Japanese cooperation in a bilateral setting, provide the JGSDF maximum exposure to U.S. techniques and rehearse the forces' ability to defend Japan, Jones said.

Launched in 1982, Yama Sakura — the largest bilateral exercise in Japan — began as a simple board game. By 1993, it was transformed into a high-tech, command-and-control drill driven by computer simulations.

Computers draw up scenarios based on real-world conditions but with no specific threat in mind. In past years, exercises have included themes such as attacks on Japan, missile defense, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and noncombatant evacuations.

According to Jones, Yama Sakura normally rotates among the five regional armies in Japan. In 2004, the exercise was held at the northern Taro, the main defense-force hub for the metropolitan area and 10 surrounding prefectures.

E-mail Vince Little at: little@pstrips.osd.mil

Article 32 ends for SEAL in Abu Ghraib case

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Prosecutors said actions by a Navy SEAL lieutenant accused of abusing an Iraqi at Abu Ghraib prison were "unacceptable by any standard," while the officer's lawyer said nothing he did warranted a court-martial.

The arguments came as a five-day Article 32 hearing, the equivalent of a civilian grand jury, concluded Wednesday. The Navy's top SEAL, Rear Adm. Joe Maguire, will decide whether the officer should face court-martial. He did not say when he would issue his recommendation.

Prosecutors said the lieutenant, who was not identified, posed in degrading photos with the handcuffed and hooded prisoner, who died a short time later. The SEAL was accused of assault, maltreatment and conduct unbecoming an officer and for his handling of detainees.

Defense attorney Matthew Freuden said the government's witnesses contradicted one another and that Navy guidelines about taking pictures of detainees was unclear.

In the photos, which were shown in court, the lieutenant flashed a thumbs-up while his

men pointed their weapons at a hooded and handcuffed detainee in the back of a Humvee. In another photo, the lieutenant is seen kneeling next to another detainee lying on the ground wearing a pumpkin mask.

Much of the evidence in the case centered on Iraqi Manadel al-Jamadi, a suspect in the bombing of a Red Cross facility.

Al-Jamadi was captured by SEALs during a joint CIA-special operations mission in November 2003. He died a few hours later under CIA interrogation in the shower room at Abu Ghraib prison.

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Iraqi forces will lead vote security, general says

BY LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. forces will play a behind-the-scenes role during the Iraqi elections later this month and Iraqi security forces will be the visible security presence at the polls, according to the U.S. commander of military forces in north central Iraq.

Army Maj. Gen. John Batiste said Thursday that he has seen great improvement in the Iraqi security forces over the last few months, and believes having them directly monitor voting — instead of U.S. troops —

Batiste: U.S. to offer support when necessary

will give more legitimacy to the election process.

"This is an election for Iraqis, by Iraqis," he said. "It's important this be an Iraqi-run election."

"You'll see Iraqi security forces at polling stations and around polling stations. They know exactly where polling stations are and have developed plans to secure them. We'll operate from a distance and provide quick support as necessary."

Batiste praised the Iraqi military and po-

lice units as courageous and diverse, saying that Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis are all represented in the forces.

He said threats and direct attacks on the forces have increased dramatically in the last few weeks, which he takes as a sign that the domestic soldiers are becoming more effective and more problematic for insurgents.

Army officials said since Oct. 1, Iraqi forces have killed about 200 insurgents and captured about 1,400 in operations

with U.S. military personnel and in independent missions.

"Leading up to the elections we expect [insurgents] to go after Iraqi security forces when they can find them in small numbers and to continue to attack us from a distance," Batiste said. "But there is no shortage of brave Iraqis who want to stand up for their country."

Batiste said he expects elections to take place throughout central Iraq, despite comments from interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi earlier this week calling parts of the country too unstable to take part.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@stripes.osd.mil

Gunmen kill aide to pro-election Iraqi cleric

BY SINAN SALAHEDDIN
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Gunmen killed a representative of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's most senior Shiite Muslim cleric, along with the aide's son and four bodyguards in a town south of Baghdad, an official in the cleric's office said Thursday.

Insurgents trying to derail Iraq's Jan. 30 elections appeared to be sending a message to al-Sistani, who strongly supports the vote.

Insurgents have targeted electoral workers and candidates.

Elsewhere, gunmen opened fire on a minibus picking up a Turkish businessman from the Bakhani Hotel in central Baghdad on Thursday, killing six Iraqis and kidnapping the Turk, who reportedly ran a construction company that worked with U.S.-led occupation authorities.

Sheik Mahmood Finjan, al-Sistani's representative in the town of Salman Pak, 10 miles southeast of Baghdad, was shot dead Wednesday night as he was returning home from a mosque where he performed the evening prayers, the official said on condition of anonymity.

The aide's son and four bodyguards also were killed, the official said at al-Sistani's office in the Shiite holy city of Najaf.

Shiites make up 60 percent of



Iraqis have their morning tea Thursday next to electoral posters featuring the Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, in Baghdad. The elections planned for Jan. 30 are the first democratic elections in Iraq since the country was formed in 1932.

Iraq's 26 million people and are expected to dominate the 275-member National Assembly in the first free elections held in Iraq since it became independent in 1932.

Some Sunnis, who are 20 percent of the population, fear a loss of the dominance and privilege they enjoyed for decades. Sunni clerics have called for a boycott.

Al-Sistani has urged Iraqis to

vote, calling it a religious duty for every man and woman. The cleric is not running himself but is backing the 228 candidates from the United Iraqi Alliance, a coalition of 16 groups that includes Iraq's largest Shiite political party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

If many Sunnis do boycott the vote, the United Iraqi Alliance

stands to dominate the assembly, whose main job will be to write a permanent constitution.

Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi on Thursday reiterated that the Jan. 30 elections shouldn't be postponed despite some groups' concerns about security.

"There are calls for postponing for the sake of postponing and I don't think this helps Iraq," Allawi told Al-Arabiya television.

U.S. admits Iraq vote will face difficulties

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Administration officials say the Iraqi elections at the end of the month will be less than perfect, but nonetheless will pave the way for a drawdown of U.S. troops.

"The election is not going to be perfect," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said Wednesday. "This is the first time Iraqis will be able to freely choose their leaders. It's for a transitional government and it's one of three elections that will take place over the course of this year."

Separately, Secretary of State Colin Powell said American troops will begin leaving this year as the Iraqi army, national guard and police force take on a larger security role.

Powell has said it is imperative for the elections to go forward as planned to give more credence to the concept that insurgents are fighting an Iraqi government rather than an American occupation force.

The U.S. military's ground forces commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, has said that while most of Iraq's 18 provinces are secure enough for the elections to proceed, security remains poor in four provinces. Those provinces

— Nineveh, Anbar, Salahadin and Baghdad — are home to about 25 percent of Iraq's population.

McClellan said coalition forces and the Iraqi government are "working to address those ongoing security challenges."

"We want to make sure that there's as broad a participation as possible in those elections," he said. One idea being considered is to let people who are prevented from voting by violence to vote later.

One provision that may help overcome logistical challenges and encourage turnout in troubled provinces is to allow people in those parts of the country to vote anywhere they like, rather than only at a specified polling place, officials suggested.

In Iraq, 14 million of Iraq's 26 million people have so far registered to vote, according to the White House.

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Malaria threat emerges in South Asia

Tsunami leaves kids vulnerable to rebels

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Health officials planned to go door-to-door and tent-to-tent with mosquito-killing spray guns beginning Friday to head off a looming threat that one expert says could kill 100,000 more people around the tsunami disaster zone: malaria.

The devastation and heavy rains are creating conditions for the largest area of mosquito breeding sites Indonesia has ever seen, said the head of the aid group anchoring the anti-malaria campaign on Sumatra island. The pools of salt water created by the Dec. 26 tsunami have been diluted by seasonal rains into a brackish water that mosquitoes love.

While the threat of cholera and dysentery outbreaks is diminishing by the day because clean water is increasingly getting to tsunami survivors, the danger of malaria and dengue fever epidemics is increasing, said Richard



A refugee covers his face as a volunteer fumigates a refugee camp Thursday, in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. As the threat of cholera diminished by the day because clean water is increasingly getting to tsunami survivors, the danger of malaria and dengue fever epidemics is now beginning to skyrocket, experts say.

Allan, director of the Mentor Initiative, a public health group that fights malaria epidemics.

The death toll from the earthquake and tsunami has topped 157,000 across 11 countries after Indonesia added nearly 4,000 more to its tally. Allan warned that an outbreak of malaria could take an additional 100,000 lives

around the Indian Ocean if authorities don't act quickly.

Asked about World Health Organization warnings that disease could double the tsunami death toll across affected areas, Allan said: "If anything, I think they are being conservative. Three-quarters of those deaths could be from malaria."

WHO said Thursday that seven cases of malaria have been confirmed in Aceh province. They are popping up now both because malaria season is just beginning and because a reporting system has been put in place over the last few days.

Relief workers in Aceh province, meanwhile, warned that new rules requiring them to travel with armed escorts could cause bottlenecks in delivering aid and compromise their arms-length status from Indonesia's military.

"We discourage such actions because it blurs the distinction between humanitarian and military efforts here," said Eileen Burke of Save the Children.

Burke said her group has so far had no escorts — or problems — with their work in Sigli, about 60 miles from the provincial capital, Banda Aceh.

The cornerstone of the anti-malaria offensive is an insecticide-spraying operation, where fumigators will walk from house to house in all neighborhoods of Banda Aceh.

They will spray the walls and put a small chalk mark on the outside of the front door as they leave so that no homes are left out and locations covered can be accurately mapped.

The tents in the refugee camps dotted around the city will also be sprayed, but those are home to

only a tiny fraction of the population. Most people have been taken in by other families.

In communities along the west coast of Sumatra where almost all buildings were wiped out, the main defense will be pesticide-impregnated plastic sheeting, which villagers use for shelter.

"This will be the first situation where there is an incredible threatening epidemic and where if we get everything in place without obstruction ... we have a chance of stemming the starting point of an epidemic which otherwise will undoubtedly happen," Allan said.

Meanwhile in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Tamil Tiger rebels recruited three tsunami-affected girls to their ranks but later released two of them, UNICEF officials said Thursday.

The girls, ages 11 and 12, were reunited with their parents, and UNICEF was working to secure the release of the third, who is 15 years old, said Geoffrey Keel, a spokesman for the agency.

The three are from eastern Batticaloa and Ampara, among the areas that were worst-hit by the Dec. 26 tsunami. The rebels are known to recruit children to bolster their ranks in their fight for a separate Tamil homeland.

Children accounted for a staggering 40 percent, or 12,000, of Sri Lanka's tsunami death toll of nearly 31,000. Another 800,000 people have been left homeless.

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Thatcher admits guilt

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — Sir Mark Thatcher pleaded guilty Thursday to unwittingly helping to finance a failed coup plot in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea, accepting a \$506,000 fine and suspended jail sentence.

The plea deal allows Thatcher, the son of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, to leave South Africa and to rejoin his family in the United States.

Mark Thatcher admitted in the Cape High Court that he paid to charter a helicopter, which mercenaries planned to use in their attempted takeover. But he maintains he believed it was to be used for humanitarian purposes, according to his lawyers and a person close to the family.

Only later did he begin to suspect the helicopter would be used for military purposes, according to a statement issued by a member of his legal team.

Record airline fliers

FRANKFURT, Germany — Frankfurt Airport, continental Europe's busiest, enjoyed an unprecedented number of fliers in 2004, with a 5.7 percent jump in traffic in 2003, its operator said.

The airport closed the year with 51.1 million passengers, setting a new annual passenger record, said Fraport AG, its operating company.

Most of the growth was seen in intercontinental flights, particularly connections to North America, the Middle East, and southern Asia. It also achieved double-digit growth in freight tonnage, which was up 13.1 percent over 2003.

Black Hawk crashes

BOGOTA, Colombia — A Black Hawk helicopter crashed Thursday during a counternarcotics mission in the jungles of southwest Colombia, killing all 20 soldiers aboard, the army said.

The helicopter, used in the U.S.-funded anti-drug effort called Plan Colombia, went down just after midnight near the town of Tumaco, 370 miles southwest of the capital.

Early investigations indicate the crash occurred due to "bad weather," according to the army statement.

The Black Hawk that went down was part of an assault mission that included seven other aircraft, the statement said.

Speaking on local radio, army chief Gen. Reinaldo Castellanos said the area is crawling with Marxist guerrillas from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

Fire kills Iranian pupils

TEHRAN, Iran — Thirteen elementary school pupils died Thursday in a school fire that erupted after a malfunctioning heater ignited a nearby barrel of kerosene, a local official said.

One teacher was in serious condition in a local hospital after the fire in Saffian village, some 435 miles south of Tehran, in Chaharmahal va Bakhtiari province.

District Governor Ali Khani told state television the 13 students and the teacher were the only people in the school at the time of the fire.

From The Associated Press

Abbas says he'll address security commitments

BY MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH
The Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said Thursday that he is ready to honor the security commitments in an internationally backed peace plan, adding that he hopes to resume peace talks with Israel soon.

Meanwhile, a top Hamas leader held out the possibility of a cease-fire with Israel. Sheikh Hassan Youssef, the group's top official in the West Bank, also said Hamas does not seek to eliminate Israel.

Abbas, elected earlier this week, said Thursday he is eager to restart talks on the "road map," a peace plan backed by the United States, European Union, Russia and the United Nations.

The plan, which envisions an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, has been stalled since it was launched in mid-2003 amid violations by both sides. The road map requires Israel to freeze settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza, while Palestinians must dismantle militant groups.

"We emphasize before you that



Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia, left, and Palestinian Authority president-elect Mahmoud Abbas participate in a meeting in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Thursday.

we are committing to the road map," Abbas said after a meeting with local and international Christian leaders.

"As you know, this plan starts with security commitments and eventually deals with the final status issues, like borders and Jerusalem. We are ready to implement our commitments. We hope the Israeli side will do the same," he added.

Abbas did not specify what sort of security measures he is ready to take, but securing a cease-fire promise from Hamas would give him a boost. He has rejected Israeli calls to confront militants, trying instead to co-opt them.

Abbas will have a difficult time moving forward without an agreement with the militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

In public, the groups have rejected calls for a cease-fire, but have signaled they are open to the

idea if Abbas can guarantee their safety from Israel. Abbas also appears to have wide public support from a Palestinian public weary from more than four years of fighting with Israel.

Acknowledging the new political landscape, Youssef, the Hamas leader, said the group might reconsider its violent tactics, though he said no decision has been made.

"We read the regional and the international reality and the changes that have taken place based on this reality, and we take positions according to these changes," he said Thursday.

"Hamas doesn't want to eliminate Israel. Hamas is a realistic political movement," he added.

Abbas is to be sworn into office on Saturday. He said that soon after he forms a new government, "there will be contacts with Israel that will start with calm and security, and then move to the other issues."

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IN THE STATES

Residents in West survey storm damage

BY KEN RITTER
The Associated Press

OVERTON, Nev. — Unwilling to wait any longer and ignoring warnings that more water might be on the way, residents in the West returned to homes damaged by storm-swollen creeks and rivers.

"We've just got a big mess to clean up," said James Watkins, 50, as churning brown water receded around his Overton home.

As residents came, emergency responders began pulling out at dawn Thursday from small southern Nevada towns, replaced by road crews and health officials looking at the safety of the water supply and sewer systems, and testing roads flooded when water crested Wednesday.

The heaviest flooding was concentrated here, in the area where Nevada, Arizona and Utah meet; 18 homes were destroyed or condemned in St. George, Utah.

North Dakota experienced blizzard or near-blizzard conditions, followed by a wind chill advisory for the state, with conditions that could feel as cold as 50 below zero.

Two people were killed and 13 injured in southern Arkansas' Union County late Wednesday or early Thursday by a violent storm that local officials said was apparently a tornado.

But the worst losses were at La Conchita in California's Ventura County, where a mudslide Monday crushed 15 homes and killed 10 residents.

Everyone on a list of missing people has been located. Authorities ended the search Thursday for victims and warned residents not to return to the town because of the danger of another collapse.

"We have seen the power of nature cause damage and despair, but we will match that power with our own resolve," California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said Wednesday, surveying the devastation caused by the huge mudslide. Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency in Ventura County, making it eligible for government aid.

A hillside began eroding away from beneath a private road in the tony Mount Olympus area of the Hollywood Hills, and 13 people were evacuated as five homes were red-tagged as unsafe. Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn said Wednesday the city had sustained damage totaling about \$10 million.

People in Ventura County's Piru still were isolated Wednesday, with Highway 126 closed due to mudslides on both sides of town. Several campers and others were stranded.

"It brings everyone together," said Richard



A man in Santa Clara, Utah, speaks on his cell phone Wednesday at the end of a cul-de-sac, where a house stood until the night before.

Aries, 42. "We're relatively lucky — fortunate compared to other people."

When the storm system later dumped rain over Nevada, Arizona and Utah, combined with sudden snowmelt, rivers transformed into raging torrents.

At least 18 homes have been lost or condemned because of record flood waters along the Santa Clara River in Utah. Some 100 families are reportedly displaced.

The Muddy River fanned out over ranches and farms, collapsed riverbanks near downtown Overton and forced an estimated 200 people to flee. Officials warned that flooding remained possible overnight.

"We're expecting a surge," police Sgt. Michael Dailey said after night fell on a second day of on-again, off-again flood advisories. "But we believe the widened channel will be able to handle it."

Authorities said flooding affected at least 100 homes, apartments and motor homes in the Overton area, a desert hamlet of some 2,000 families about 50 miles northeast of Las Vegas. A police helicopter rescued five people Wednesday in the Overton area, including

two children, when they became trapped by rising water.

In nearby Moapa Valley, state officials planned to deliver feed by helicopter to about 700 head of cattle stranded for three days.

A few miles north in Beaver Dam, Ariz., residents began returning to some 1,400 homes cut off Tuesday when raging waters washed out a road at the Beaver Dam Wash bridge. Authorities estimated 22 homes in Beaver Dam and nearby Littlefield, Ariz., were damaged or destroyed by flooding.

Back in Nevada, officials in Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, declared an emergency in response to flooding and the threat that avalanches posed to 66 homes on Mount Charleston.

Kim Evans, of the Nevada state Department of Public Safety, said the National Guard was mobilized to provide help in Lincoln County, where 600 people evacuated because of flooding.

About 60 homes in the Caliente area reported flood damage. The Air Force helped airlift about 140 children and counselors from a state youth corrections facility in Caliente to Panama.

Dad's frantic search for family ends in tragedy

BY GREG RISLING
The Associated Press

LA CONCHITA, Calif. — Jimmie Wallet moved to this beach town with his family in search of an easier life. On Wednesday, he identified the bodies of his wife and three of his four daughters — pulled from a tangle of homes smashed by tons of liquid earth that tumbled down from the bluff above.

No one lost more than Wallet, 37, who had gone out for ice cream when the mudslide hit, killing at least 10 people. And, driven by the frantic hope of finding his family, no one fought more to claw through the debris and help pull out survivors.

Eventually he stopped digging and started waiting, trying to be optimistic. Sleep deprived, he took drugs from a cigarette as friends stopped by to embrace him.

Early Wednesday morning, after 36 hours, his wait ended. His wife, Michelle, was the first to be found. Around 2 a.m.

The three girls — Paloma, 2, Raven, 6, and Hannah, 10 — were found next to each other, apparently sitting on a couch when the slide broke apart their house, pushing it for about 100 yards and covering it in six feet of muck.

"They never had a chance to get out," said Scott Hall, a battalion chief with Ventura County Fire Department. "It appeared they were ... unaware of the slide."

Wallet's fourth daughter, a 16-year-old, was not in the home when it happened.



Wallet

Deadly pileups in Mich., Ind.

The Associated Press

ALAIEDON TOWNSHIP, Mich. — At least two people died and 37 others were injured when about 200 vehicles crashed Wednesday in thick fog on a Michigan highway, police said.

One person also was killed in Indiana when at least 20 vehicles piled up amid heavy fog on a highway east of South Bend. Numerous others were injured.

In Michigan, a 14-year-old boy was killed when the sport utility vehicle in which he was riding and about 10 other vehicles — including a tractor-trailer — crashed on Interstate 96 outside Lansing. The boy's mother and grandmother were in critical condition, Ingham County Sheriff Gene Wrigglessworth said.

The other fatal crash occurred about 30 minutes later when a driver hit a semitrailer from be-

hind, Wrigglessworth said. The victim was not immediately identified.

A total of 114 vehicles were involved in pileups in the east-bound lanes, while between 80 and 100 vehicles crashed in the west-bound lanes, the sheriff's department said.

At least 18 people were being treated Wednesday evening at a hospital in Lansing. State police closed a 12-mile stretch of the highway in both directions following the accidents.

The chain-reaction collision in Indiana left wrecked vehicles scattered Wednesday morning in both directions over a three-mile stretch of the Indiana Toll Road, state police Sgt. Rodger Popplewell said. Police closed a 43-mile stretch of the highway for more than six hours.

Popplewell said a man riding in a van was killed.



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Plane turns back after alert

BY GLENN FRANKEL
AND SARA KEHAULANI GOO
The Washington Post

LONDON — A British Airways jet flying from London's Heathrow Airport to New York turned back three hours into its journey Wednesday after U.S. authorities objected to one of its passengers on national security grounds.

Flight 175, a Boeing 747 with 212 passengers aboard, returned to Heathrow, according to Richard Goodfellow, a British Airways spokesman. The passenger, who was carrying a French passport, was questioned by British police and released. British officials did not disclose his name or offer any further description.

British Airways said the plane

was given a new crew and refused, and that it took off again for New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport on Wednesday evening. "We want to emphasize there was no safety threat to the aircraft at any time," Goodfellow said.

An official at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the passenger was a man of Moroccan origin. Agency officials said they were confident he was a "positive match" with a person on the no-fly list that the U.S. government maintains to keep people deemed terror threats off civil aviation flights. The officials declined to provide details about why he was placed on the list.

A U.S. security official said Brit-

ish Airways probably did not have the most up-to-date no-fly list because the Department of Homeland Security recently changed the way it is distributed to airlines.

The name in question was added to the list in December, the official said. Normally, the airline would have realized before the flight departed that the passenger's name was a positive match and stopped the man from boarding.

British Airways was given the option of diverting the flight to Bangor, Maine, where most inbound trans-Atlantic flights with such problems land, but chose instead to return the plane to London, according to Yolanda Clark, a spokeswoman for the Transportation Security Administration.

Mass. researchers link gene to common form of deafness

BY PAUL REGER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Researchers have identified a gene that prevents the regeneration of inner ear cells that are critical to hearing, a discovery experts say is the first step toward finding a way to correct the most common form of deafness among the elderly.

In laboratory mouse studies at Massachusetts General Hospital, researchers found that by eliminating the effects of a single gene they could cause inner ear cells vital to hearing to regrow. The regrowth replaces nerve endings, called hair cells, that are often lost to injury or age.

"Most deafness is caused by the loss of these hair cells," said Zheng-Yi Chen, leader of the hospital research team. "Now we have the means to regenerate these cells."

The goal, said Chen, is to learn to find a way to turn off this gene in the inner ear of humans, probably with a drug, and allow the regrowth of hair cells. "That would lead to recovery of hearing," said Chen. He is senior author of the study appearing this week in the journal *Science*.

Dr. James P. Battey, director of the National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disor-

ders, one of the National Institutes of Health, said the discovery by Chen's team "is a very important first step toward learning" how to restore hearing in human patients.

The hair cells are a key link in the signal chain that makes hearing possible. The cells line the cochlea, part of the inner ear that sends the sensation of sound to the brain.

Sonic vibrations from the eardrum and bones of the middle ear are relayed to the cochlea where they excite the hair cells. This energy is converted to electrical signals that are carried by nerves to the brain and interpreted as sound.

Humans are born with about 50,000 inner ear hair cells, but the cells decline over time due to injury, disease or age. Once enough of the cells die, then the hearing begins to fade because the cells do not naturally regenerate, said Stefan Heller, a hearing researcher at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary.

In the study, the research team surveyed all the genes that are active during the embryonic development of the inner ear. The researchers discovered that a protein made by the retinoblastoma, or Rb1, gene halted the growth of hair cells. In effect, they found that the Rb1 protein was a molecular switch that turned off hair cell proliferation.

Time cut for Martha?

NEW YORK — Martha Stewart's legal team is reportedly studying whether a Supreme Court ruling tossing out federal sentencing guidelines could shorten the length of her confinement.

The court on Wednesday struck down part of a nearly two-decade-old sentencing system and imposed new requirements.

Among them, it said appeals courts must ensure that recommended sentences are reasonable.

The decision will affect people whose cases are pending, or defendants whose first appeals are not yet completed — like Stewart.

The homebased expert was sentenced to five months in prison and five months of home confinement after being convicted of lying about why she unloaded shares of InClone Systems Inc. stock before the price plunged.

Former J.P. Morgan exec pleads guilty to bribery

PHILADELPHIA — A former J.P. Morgan vice president, Anthony C. Snell, pleaded guilty Thursday to arranging a \$500,000 payment to a close friend and adviser of Mayor John F. Street in an attempt to win favor with the administration.

Investigators accused Snell and his supervisor of submitting a false invoice to the company to make it appear as if Street confidant Ronald A. White had performed some legal work for J.P. Morgan.

White died in November while awaiting trial.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Snell could receive up to a year in prison.

FBI agents learned of the alleged payment when they tapped White's phone and bugged his office during a lengthy investigation into the conduct of several municipal officials in Philadelphia.

Ridge recommends fingerprints on passports

WASHINGTON — The United States should put the fingerprints of its citizens on passports to enhance global security, outgoing Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said in a recommendation risking a privacy fight at home.

Ridge said Wednesday passports could ideally include biometric fingerprint scans — for all 10 fingers — to help customs officials quickly and accurately identify U.S. travelers. He offered no details on how the plan might deal with privacy concerns or guard against international identity theft.

"If we're going to ask the rest of the world to put fingerprints on their passports, we ought to put our fingerprints on our passports," Ridge said in a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies before heading overseas to talk about security ties with the European Union.

No-fly list to stand

SEATTLE — A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the government's no-fly list of terror suspects barred from boarding airplanes.

U.S. District Judge Thomas S. Zilly threw out the bulk of the case for lack of jurisdiction, saying that most claims brought by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of people with names identical or similar to those on the list must be taken directly to a federal appeals court.

He dismissed the rest of the case on the merits, saying the no-fly list had resulted in no "tangible harm" to the plaintiffs' lives.

From wire reports

Power restored to remote Alaskan village under deep freeze

BY MARY PEMBERTON
The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Electricity was restored to most homes in an Arctic village Wednesday, four days after the community lost power in a fierce blizzard and was thrown into a deep freeze.

An Alaska Air National Guard helicopter reached Kaktovik on Tuesday, bringing two technicians who were able to restore power to about three-quarters of the village of 300 people more than 200 miles above the Arctic Circle.

On Wednesday, two National Guard planes dropped off generators, heaters, food, water and other supplies, such as diapers and infant formula. The planes also brought plumbers, mechanics, medical workers and more electrical linemen.

The planes had previously been prevented from landing by snow drifts on the runway. A

third flight carrying propane and other hazardous materials was due in Wednesday night.

A blizzard packing near hurricane-force winds knocked out power to the village Sunday and plunged temperatures to 20 degrees below zero. Officials believe the outage may have been caused by power lines snapping together and arcing during the storm.

Schoolteacher Adam Hausman was staying with five other people in a house that still had no power Wednesday. It was about 30 degrees inside the home, which was being warmed a little with a gas stove, he said.

"We just have been kind of cuddled up in two rooms," he said. "It has been too cold [for school]. Your hands, you can't even turn the pages."

Many residents sought shelter at the village school until it lost power. About 100 people moved to the village's equipment maintenance building, which had a generator.



Residents of Kaktovik, Alaska, unload emergency supplies Wednesday from an Alaska National Guard C-130 aircraft amid high snow drifts. Electricity was restored to most homes in the Arctic village four days after a blizzard packing near hurricane-force winds knocked out power and plunged temperatures to 20 below zero.

AP

Hacker breaks into T-Mobile network

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In the heat of a monthslong hacker investigation into an extraordinary break-in at a leading wireless carrier's network, an Internet informant approached the Secret Service with startling news: The targeted hackers were reading some of the agency's own e-mails and computer files.

The trove of illicit government data included a "highly sensitive" internal Secret Service memorandum and part of a mutual assistance legal treaty from Russia, according to court records. A hunted hacker turned his sights on his pursuers, targeting at one point the desktop computer of a Secret Service agent on his trail.

The break-in targeted the network of Bellevue, Wash.-based T-Mobile USA. It was discovered during a broader Secret Service investigation, "Operation Firewall," which targeted underground hacker organizations.

But in a twist, one of the government's investigators was also a T-Mobile customer and sometimes used the wireless network to communicate about the case.

Nicolas Lee Jacobsen, 21, of Santa Ana, Calif., a computer engineer, has been charged with the T-Mobile break-in in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. Investigators said they traced the hacker's activities to a hotel near Buffalo, N.Y., where Jacobsen was staying.

Drug maker seeks OTC status for its cholesterol blocker

BY LAURA MECKLER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The government is considering whether a drug for a serious chronic condition — high cholesterol — should be sold on drugstore shelves alongside medicines for headaches, allergies and athlete's foot.

Supporters say making a low-dose cholesterol medicine available without a doctor's prescription would help get needed treatment to millions of Americans who are at risk of heart disease.

"There's a huge treatment gap," said Jerry Hansen, vice president of marketing at Johnson & Johnson-Merck Consumer Pharmaceuticals Co., a joint venture that is asking the Food and Drug Administration for permission to sell a low-dose version of Mevacor over the counter.

The drug, he notes, has been on the market for a long time and has proven quite safe.

But opponents say selling directly to the consumer allows patients to skip doctor visits, where they might be told to change their diet and exercise — both crucial in the effort to lower cholesterol.

"This is going to encourage people to take medication rather than alter other parts of their lifestyle," said Dr. Michael Schloss, clinical co-director of the Cholesterol Treatment and Research Center at New York University.

A panel of FDA scientific advisers was considering the request Thursday and Friday. The FDA usually follows the recommendations of its advisers.

The drug is only meant for a slice of the population: men 45 and older and women 55 and older whose LDL — low-density lipoprotein, or "bad" cholesterol — count is between 130 and 170. They should also have at least one risk factor for heart disease, such as smoking, high blood pressure, family history of heart disease or an HDL — high-density lipoprotein, or "good" cholesterol — count of less than 40.

Certain patients, such as pregnant women, should not use Mevacor.

Mevacor was the first of the statin drugs, which lower cholesterol by limiting the buildup of artery-clogging fat deposits, reducing the risk of heart attack by about a third. As a group, statins made some \$14 billion in the United States alone last year.

Makers of Mevacor say the company will encourage patients to get their cholesterol checked after they begin treatment, though critics say there's no guarantee patients will do it. The company does not want the FDA to require tests of liver function, despite concerns that the drug can cause inflammation of the liver.



Construction work for President Bush's inauguration ceremony continues on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington. It will take Bush less than one minute to take the oath of office but the price tag for inaugural festivities is expected to top \$40 million.

Bush's inauguration a pricey affair

President's second swearing-in may cost \$40 million

BY JIM ABRAMS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It will take President Bush less than a minute to take the oath of office next Thursday, but before the inaugural events are over some \$40 million may have been spent on parades, parties and pyrotechnics.

And that doesn't include the costs of the most intense security operation in inaugural history.

The amount spent on this year's festivities will rival the \$40 million raised to celebrate Bush's first inauguration in 2001, and will exceed the \$33 million spent by President Clinton in 1993 when Democrats returned to the White House for the first time in 12 years.

While the partying is being paid for privately, there have been some muttering about the scale of the celebrations at a time of war and natural disasters.

"Precedent suggests that inaugural festivities should be muted — if not canceled — in wartime," Anthony Weiner, a Democratic congressman from New York, wrote Bush on Tuesday.

Money for the celebratory activities is being raised by the Presidential Inaugural Committee, which as of the end of last week had received \$18 million, much in six-figure donations from wealthy supporters and corporate sponsors.

Among the dozens of donors who've given at least \$250,000 donors are retailer Home Depot, Bank of America Corp., pharmaceutical company Bristol-Myers Squibb and Ford Motor Co.

Kevin Sheridan, a spokesman for the committee,

said the fund-raisers were confident they would reach their goals. Sales of inaugural memorabilia, another source of revenue, have been even better than in 2001, he said.

The big donors are rewarded with a variety of inaugural packages, including meetings with political VIPs, tickets to the swearing-in ceremony and parade, and hard-to-get entry into the official inaugural balls and dinners.

The events begin Tuesday with a salute to the troops and a youth concert. On Wednesday there will be a celebration on the Ellipse park, including a fireworks show, and three candlelight dinners.

On Thursday afternoon, after Bush takes the oath of office at the Capitol, some 11,000 people will take part in a parade from the Capitol down Pennsylvania Avenue, to the White House. That night there will be nine official balls.

D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams has estimated it will cost the district \$17.3 million to help pay for security at the first post-Sept. 11 inauguration, which includes 6,000 law officers and 2,500 military personnel to guard the 250,000 people at the swearing-in and the half-million expected to line the parade route.

Williams, in a letter last month to Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, said he can use \$5.4 million from a fund for special events in the capital, but the other \$11.9 million will have to come from the city's federal homeland security budget.

Inauguration day, with its street closings and heightened security, will also be a holiday for federal workers in the Washington area. That, according to the Office of Personnel Management, costs taxpayers an estimated \$66 million.

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SATURDAY EVENING / JANUARY 15, 2005

[illegible]

IADAN

Afternoon
1:00 Traditional Arts of Japan: Dance (3)(r)
3:05 Grand Sumo: The 7th Day (1)
4:00 HTB Cup Ski Jump (10)
4:30 Between the Lions (3)(r)
Evening
7:00 News (1)
9:00 U.S. (2001): Ocean's Eleven (2)(19)(8)
12:45 ER VIII (1)
1:35 Grand Sumo Digest (1)
2:10 French Movie (1964): Les Parapluies de Cherbourg (1:58)(6)
2:10 PGA Tour: Sony Open in Hawaii (8)
2:55 NFL: Wild Card Playoffs - Teams

3:16 Classical Music (3)(r)
3:20 U.S. Movie (1997): Rag & Bone
(1:30)(12)
3:24 Classical Music (1)(1)
4:00 Grand Sumo Digest (1)(r)

JAPAN TV-BS7

Morning
6:10 World News
7:10 World News
8:10 World News Hour
9:10 World News Hour
10:10 World Reports (r)
11:10 History of FIFA (1)
11:30 History of FIFA (2)
11:50 CNN News

Afternoon
12:10 BS Documentary: Overfishing in
the Northern Atlantic

8:15 Samurai vs. Seagulls/Pioneer Red Wings vs. Toray Arrows
 :10 X-Games 2004
 :40 Football Mundial
Evening
 :10 BS Documentary: Being Pavlov
 :10 NBA: Dallas Mavericks vs. San Antonio Spurs
 :10 NFL Weekly
 :10 CNN News
 :12:20 Grand Sumo Digest
 :12:50 2004 X-Games in HD
 :10 NBA: Dallas Mavericks vs. San Antonio Spurs (r)
 :10 What's On Asia
 :35 World Amazing Sports
 :10 What's On Japan
 :10 NFL Weekly
 :40 Football Mundial

JAPAN TV/BS11

Evening
 100 Grand Slam Tournament, 7th Day (bilingual after 3:50 p.m.)
 100 NHK News
 100 32nd American Music Awards
 100 French Movie (1981): La Femme D'A Cote (1:50)
WOWOW
Morning
 100 U.S. Movie (1996): Courage Under Fire (1:57)
 100 TV Series: Dawson's Creek
 100 TV Series: CSI: Crime Scene Investigation - Miami 2

U.S. Movie (2003): Evil Never Dies (1:30)	12:00
U.S. Movie (1995): Virtuosity (1:50)	1:00
U.S. Movie (2002): John Q. (1:57)	3:00
Erning	3:30
U.S. Movie (2002): Antwone Fisher (2:04)	4:00
TV Series: Friends: The Best #7	7:00
TV Series: Friends: The Best #8	7:30
Canadian Movie (2002): Bliss (1:40)	8:00
Spanish Soccer Liga Espanola (live)	8:30
	9:30
MTV	
	11:00
Erning	1:00
Wake Up!	1:30
Classic '90s	2:00
	2:30
	3:00

Music Download Chart Top 10
World Chart Express Supported
by Honda
Pimp My Ride
America or Busted
On-Air Chart Top 30
Rating
Consensus: Jennifer Lopez
Screen
Ultimate Mash-Ups: Jay Z vs.
Linkin Park
Now & Then: Mash-Up Special -
Jay Z, Linkin Park
Jay Z Special: Making the Video
of 29 Problems* Unplugged - Jay Z
U.S. Top 20 with Super DRY
Pimp My Ride
Check the Rhyme
America or Busted
Rock On
Trainsurf Special

MOVIES • SPORTS

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Facts don't justify curfew

After reading Army Command Sgt. Maj. Greg B. Buncie's Jan. 10 letter "Keeping curfew in context" I had to reread retired Navy Cmdr. Scott Smith's Dec. 24 letter "Curfew just a morality move" to which the latter writer referred) to be sure we had both read the same letter. Yes, Cmdr. Smith states that the curfew should be lifted, but the reasons are neither arbitrary nor does he focus on the curfew for the active military members. Cmdr. Smith's focus is on the civilian contractors and Department of Defense civilians who provide support in various fields.

Cmdr. Smith specifically dealt with the fraudulent use of "force protection" and is the reason for imposing the curfew and he is right on in that regard. If the command wishes to keep the soldiers battle-ready to "fight tonight," then they have the means through the force readiness curfew that has been in place in South Korea for years. They can do this without abridging the civil liberties of American citizens whose only offense is working for U.S. Forces Korea and providing critical support.

Further, if there is a threat in South Korea that warrants a full status-of-force agreement curfew, where is the U.S. Embassy warning or travel restriction for South Korea? The answer is simple, there is none and the U.S. Embassy has no intention at this time to issue or impose one. So what is the threat? If USFK has information that indicates there is a threat of this magnitude, one that justifies curtailing American civil liberties, then what is it? If they are not sharing that information with the U.S. Embassy, then we have a real problem.

There is a difference between "force protection" and "force readiness," and that is the existence of a viable threat. If there is a threat, then tell us what it is so that we can decide what is best for our families, not the command. If there is a viable threat, we may decide it is best to send our families back to the States rather than locking them up at night and yes, maybe even leaving our lives. This is not command's decision and we have a right to the information to make a valid decision.

Air Force Maj. Rick Durkin (Ret.)
South Korea

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Troops don't need detractors

When our young American heroes are fighting some of the most despicable people on Earth, and are abused by the Arab press and Al-Jazeera television over an uncorroborated incident that may or may not have happened in the middle of one of the biggest battles of this war on terrorism, this old veteran has to throw in his two cents' worth to support our troops, and especially the young trooper in this uncorroborated mosque incident.

Where was all this Arab anger when our American troops were mutilated, burned and hung from a bridge, or when our American and coalition brothers were tortured and beheaded?

Now, after an uncorroborated incident in a mosque that was headlined as was the press and a hide-out for terrorists who would kill any American they see with a weapon or a booty bag on their bodies, others try to show some kind of misdeed by one of our brave men.

If these wannabe holy men in these off-limits mosques want to keep themselves in one piece, they should quit using the

mosques as headquarters and safe houses for those who are trying to kill my American and coalition brothers and sisters. The Iraqi people should wake up before they're killed to square Saddam's head with Hussein. Let our troops alone to do their job.

David J. Robinson
Florence, N.J.

Anti-hunting logic flawed

Economics, violence of killing an animal, "accidental" shooting injuries, and "civilized behavior" are the subjects of "Hunting is not best approach" (Jan. 9). Unfortunately, the writer's philosophy is flawed.

I grew up in the cattle industry of Oklahoma. Many of my youthful days were spent on the kill floors of a slaughterhouse. My most vivid memory is of an incident when I was about 15 years old. They use electrodes to electrocute hogs. Generally, this does not kill the hog, but he screamed as he was lowered into the vat of hot water to scald the hair off before gutting him out.

Cattle are killed in a similarly humane way. A large sledgehammerlike device is used to hit them on the forehead. Generally, it does not kill them, but when the beef is hung by its back legs and allowed to bleed out, it will die. The beef is then skinned and gutted.

Living in the cattle industry can also be a hard and painful lesson. It is hard to look at a carcass with "Choice" stamped on it. I spent countless hours training, feeding, grooming, showing and just plain loving that steer. The lesson learned is that life is not fair, and it is cruel even to the things you care for the most.

They are called slaughterhouses for a reason. Killing is a messy business. To humanely kill an animal using drugs or other chemicals would contaminate the meat. To kill and not consume the remains of an animal is a sin where I come from.

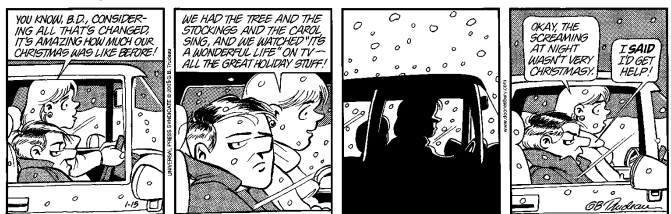
Wildlife is managed by the "sport" of hunting. However, there are still a lot of people who depend on hunting and fishing to provide food.

There are more accidental shootings as the result of having handguns in the home than result from hunting. The incident in Wisconsin was not accidental, but rather an act of homicide.

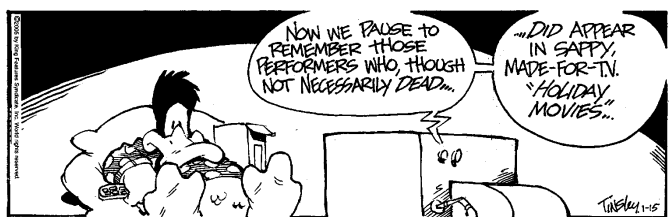
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BY GARRY TRUDEAU

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Mallard Fillmore



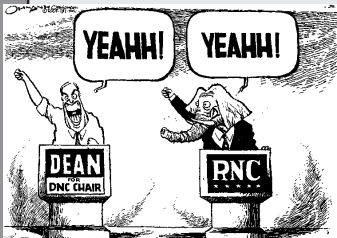
BY BRUCE TINSLEY

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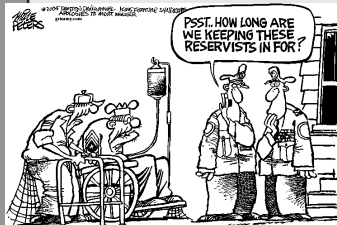
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Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



JACK OHMAN/Tribune Media Services



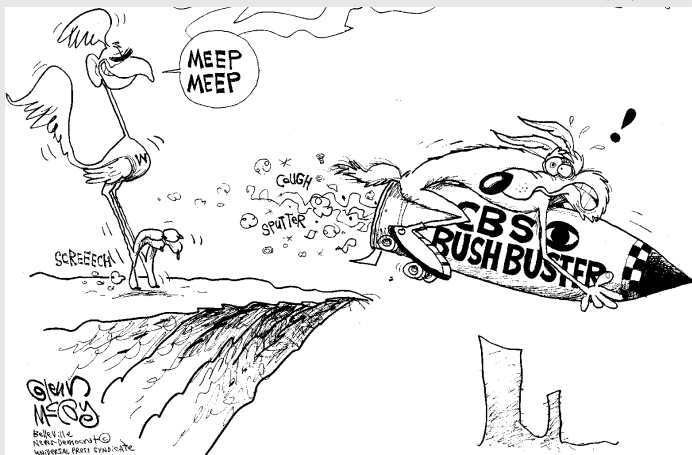
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AG issues warning

MA BOSTON — Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly has warned nursing home owners and managers that they may be violating workers' civil rights by imposing English-only policies that ban them from speaking their native languages, even on breaks.

Nursing homes in recent years have relied on immigrants, many of them Haitian, to take difficult jobs, including bathing and feeding elderly residents and pushing their wheelchairs. But some say workplace discrimination is on the rise as well.

Advocates say nursing homes impose English-only policies that apply even to meal breaks and private telephone conversations.

Reilly issued an advisory opinion to owners warning them that these policies may violate workers' civil rights and open them to legal action.

Officials from Reilly's office and the Massachusetts Extended Care Federation have scheduled a seminar for nursing home operators on how to prevent discrimination in the workplace.

Haitian immigrants make up as much as 80 percent of nursing assistants, advocates say.

Bus driver arrested

TN CLARKSVILLE — A school bus driver has been arrested on charges of sexually assaulting two of his foster children in Maine more than three years ago.

Roger J. Guimond, 57, of Clarksville faces five counts of sexual assault of a juvenile and seven counts of unlawful sexual contact with a juvenile in cases dating to 2001. He was arrested at his home, said Deputy Danny Shelton of the U.S. Marshall's Service office in Nashville.

He was taken to the Montgomery County Jail and awaits extradition to Maine.

Guimond moved to Clarksville from Augusta about two years ago, the Marshall's Service said. He was arrested after marshals received a tip from the Maine State Police that he was living in the town located about 50 miles northwest of Nashville.

Guimond was hired as a substitute bus driver for Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools in March 2003, and moved to full-time status in May 2003. He also worked as a bus driver in Maine.

Guimond was placed on unpaid leave by the school system.

He has no known criminal history, and Guimond's personnel file shows he has never been disciplined and no complaints have been filed against him.

2 skiers rescued

CO GRAND JUNCTION — Rescue crews found a woman and her daughter alive two days after they failed to return from cross-country skiing, but the woman's husband was still missing.

Debra Walker and 18-year-old Camille were found at about 8 a.m. Mesa County sheriff's spokeswoman Susan McBurney said. She did not have details on their condi-



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

tion, but said they did not require medical evacuation from Grand Mesa in western Colorado.

She said there was no word on Dan Walker.

The three skiers had been reported missing a day after they set out.

Up to 8 feet of snow had fallen on the top of 10,500-foot-high Grand Mesa and temperatures have been in the 20s, the National Weather Service said.

States sign agreement

TX AUSTIN — Gov. Rick Perry has signed a concealed handgun reciprocity agreement with Colorado. Texas now has agreements with 15 states to allow citizens with concealed handgun permits to legally carry those weapons. The others are Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah and Wyoming.

School forums planned

WA SEATTLE — The school board is holding seven forums to establish criteria for closing schools. The district needs to close buildings because of a budget gap and declining enrollment. Elementary schools are at 80 percent capacity and middle schools at 70 percent.

Kraft's curbs food ads

IL NORTHFIELD — Kraft Foods plans to curb advertise-



Run in the sun

A runner moves along the Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu, Calif.

ing of Oreo, regular Kool-Aid and other popular snack foods to children younger than 12 as part of an effort to encourage better eating habits.

The company, the nation's biggest food manufacturer, also said it would begin labeling some healthier products with a flag touting their benefits.

The new marketing program comes as food companies are facing rising criticism from some consumer groups and others that they are contributing to obesity in children.

Two years ago, Kraft had already moved to reduce the fat content in 200 products, cap portions for single-serve packaged snacks and quit marketing snacks at school.

As part of the new marketing program, a "Sensible Solution" label would appear on products high in nutrients such as fiber or calcium or those with low fat, sugar or sodium.

60 days for noose

FL CLEARWATER — A man accused of draping a noose around the shoulders of a black teen at a fast food restaurant was sentenced to 60 days in jail.

The judge also sentenced Louis Giannola IV, who was convicted in December of misdemeanor battery, to 10 months probation and community service. He was spared a harsher sentence because jurors declined to label the incident a hate crime.

In a brief statement read in court, the 20-year-old Giannola apologized to the victim and said he now understands the hurt he caused. Giannola also asked Dionte Hall and his family for forgiveness.

Giannola was arrested after he draped a noose around the neck of Hall, 15, while they and other teens were at a Wendy's restaurant in Largo in January 2004. Prosecutors contend some people Giannola was with were heard making racial slurs.

Giannola said he did not put the noose around Hall's neck out of hate but because another teen, whose own father is black, bet him \$10 he would not do it.

Dead tiger causes stir

CA SACRAMENTO — The first 911 call reported a 400-pound animal on the northbound lane of Highway 99. Another reported a lion.

Then a tiger.

"We got there and confirmed it was in fact a tiger," said California Highway Patrol Sgt. John Mason, who added that it had a very long tail and very big paws.

Mason said a veterinarian told him the animal had been euthanized and was being taken to the University of California-Davis for an autopsy.

The veterinarian was driving behind an associate who drove a pickup truck that swerved to avoid another car. The associate ejected the tiger from the truck.

Mason said the tiger's veterinarian was affiliated with PAWS, or Performing Animal Welfare Society, which cares for abandoned or abused exotic animals. Mason said a tow truck hoisted the 400-pound tiger off the freeway.



About to get a face full of snow

Julia Galloway, 10, bottom, and her sister, Carly, 8, wrestle in the snow at Shiawassee River Walk Park in Fenton, Mich.



Icy grip

A clothes line in north Champaign County near West Liberty, Ohio, holds only ice. An icy winter storm snapped trees and power lines and steady rain pushed rivers beyond their banks in other parts of the state.



Talking mule?

Slider Middle School students Krysta Molina, center, and Karina Brasgalla, far right, watch a mule as they wait for the departure of a wagon train from the Socorro Mission in Socorro, Texas. The mules are part of an effort to restore by wagon train, in reverse, part of the route of mid-1800s gold rush adventurer William P. Huff's trip from Houston to near Fresno, Calif.



Dueling Elvises

Simon Luxton, an Elvis Presley performer from Wellingborough, England, stares into the eyes of the "Elvis at 13" statue while visiting the Elvis Presley Birthplace in Tupelo, Miss., with other British tourists.



Whoa, can't stop

A black mallard duck slides in for a landing on the ice in the Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary lagoon in Green Bay, Wis.



Up on the roof

Oscar Vasquez, of Safeside Chimney Contractors, works on a "roof up" rebuild of a chimney at a residence on Cedar Street in Norwich, Conn.



Tiny dancers

From left, dancers Haley Argo, 3, of Ashaway, R.I.; Danielle Christina, 4, of Pawcatuck, Conn.; Julia Thornton, 4, of Westerly, R.I.; Caelan Holdredge, 3, of Westerly, R.I.; and Lindsey Maresca, 4, of Westerly, R.I., work on their tap steps during a preschool ballet and tap dance class in Westerly, R.I.

Charged with murder

MA LANESBORO — A 20-year-old man was arrested on charges of murdering his stepfather in the first homicide in this Berkshire County town in nearly 25 years, authorities said.

Christopher Robinson was ordered held on \$1 million bail pending his arraignment in Central Berkshire District Court in the killing of Neil E. Olsen, 48, of Lanesboro, said Berkshire District Attorney David Capeless.

Capeless said a preliminary autopsy report showed Olsen died of multiple gunshot wounds and blows to his head.

His body was found on the floor of a horse stall in the barn at his Main Street home, Capeless said. The Berkshire Eagle reported that Olsen had a sign and truck painting business in the barn.

Authorities did not comment on a possible motive.

2 arrested in shooting

MS MERIDIAN — Two people were arrested in a fatal shooting at a hospital that may have been related to an earlier murder-suicide attempt, police said.

One of the suspects was arrested at Rush Foundation Hospital and the other turned himself in to police, Meridian Police Chief Benny Dubose said. Both were expected to be charged.

The man fatally shot at the hospital was the son of a man who Dubose said shot himself and a woman at a Meridian home in an apparent murder-suicide attempt. Dubose said one of the suspects is the woman's son.

The man and woman found at the home did not suffer life-threatening injuries. The fatal shooting victim's name was not immediately released by authorities.

Teacher suspended

MI DEARBORN — A middle school teacher has been suspended with pay while officials investigate a report he told his students that Bedouin Arabs used the Quran as toilet paper.

The teacher is on the faculty of Woodworth Middle School in Dearborn, a Detroit suburb of 100,000. About 30,000 Dearborn residents are Arab-American.

Bedouins are members of historically nomadic tribes and make up about 10 percent of the population of the Middle East. The Quran is the Muslim holy book.

Parents complained to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and the Council on American-Islamic Relations. Imad Hamad, Michigan director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said the teacher should apologize.

Cuts to health program

TN NASHVILLE — More than 320,000 adults will be cut from TennCare under cost-saving plans proposed by Gov. Phil Bredesen, a move advocates called a "draconian" reaction to the expanded Medicaid program's spiraling price tag.

Bredesen tried to put the best light on the move, saying he found a way to keep all children covered — while preventing TennCare from bankrupting the state.

His plan calls for eliminating

323,000 adults from a program that covers roughly 1.4 million people — while retaining coverage for all 612,000 children on the program. There also will be reductions in benefits and a plan to move back to managed care organizations — as long as they accept part of the financial risk.

Many other states have been watching what happens to TennCare, once hailed as a model in state-federal partnership for solving the country's health insurance crisis.

Metro cracks down

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Metro Transit police say they're increasing efforts to catch riders who don't purchase tickets for the new Hiawatha light-rail line, which relies partly on the honor system to collect fares. The fine for fare evasion is \$140, plus about \$40 in court costs. Stations have no entry turnstiles, and transit police perform random checks for tickets and passes.

Cow washes in with tide

CA SAN FRANCISCO — The highest tide of the year brought an unusual visitor to Ocean Beach — a dead cow.

While it is not unusual for dead sea animals such as sea lion, God whales to wash up on the beach, this was the first time anyone could remember that a cow ended up on the coast of San Francisco.

The all-black animal is bigger than a calf and smaller than a dairy cow. It was reported to the National Park Police by a visitor.

Where the animal came from or how it got in the ocean is a mystery.

"We've never had a dead cow on the beach before," said National Park Service spokesman Rich Wideman.

Builders replicating boat

ME ROCKPORT — Boat builders are replicating one of the three ships that carried settlers to Virginia in 1607 to establish the first permanent English settlement in the New World. Rockport Marine is building the 86-foot Godspeed for the Jamestown Settlement's living history museum. The \$2.2 million ship is expected to be completed next year.

Plans for merger

CA LOS ANGELES — Voters may decide whether to merge the Los Angeles International Airport police with the city police. A City Council committee voted unanimously to support a ballot measure to remove a City Charter provision requiring an independent airport police force. The recommendation goes to the full council later this month.

Bargaining rescinded

IN INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Mitch Daniels rescinded executive orders that established collective bargaining and allowed union settlements for about 25,000 state workers, saying they were cumbersome and would hinder his plans to reorganize state government. The move drew criticism from The Unity Team, a union that represents more than 14,000 state employees.

Stories and photos from wire services

Fox trot



B.C.



Baby Bites



Spider Man



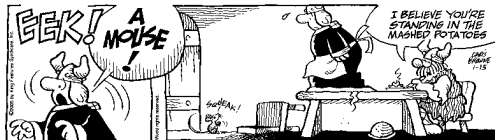
Blondie



Dilbert



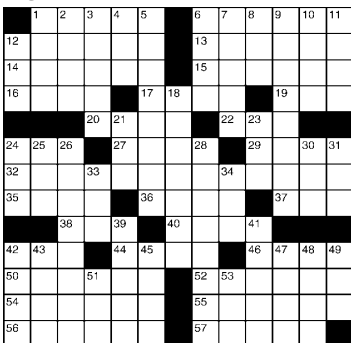
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 The 2004 World Series, e.g.
- 6 Pure
- 12 The town cutup?
- 13 Jennifer, on "Friends"
- 14 Suitable for farming
- 15 Honor
- 16 Pickable
- 17 Help surreptitiously
- 19 Buxom model's monogram
- 20 Carthaginian queen
- 22 Still
- 24 Boom times
- 27 Ship-related (Abbr.)
- 29 Obsessed seaman
- 32 Advances
- 35 Quarry
- 36 Small combo
- 37 24 hours
- 38 "Amazing Race" episode
- 40 Carolina college
- 42 Nectar collector
- 44 "A Little Bitty Tear" singer
- 46 Unsure one's reply
- 50 Do re mi, etc.
- 52 Lake near Syracuse
- 54 Pushes rudely
- 55 Long-vowel indicator
- 56 Voiced, in linguistics
- 57 Farmers' gear

Down

- 1 Calcutta clothing
- 2 Call it a day on the set
- 3 Underwent recession
- 4 Elusive one
- 5 Adjust to biological change
- 6 Great Lakes indigene
- 7 Precipitous
- 8 Don't just sit there
- 9 Put in a scabbard
- 10 Adolescent
- 11 "Desire Under the ..."
- 12 Baseball (Abbr.)
- 18 Running ballet step
- 21 Officeholders
- 23 Attention

- 24 Fenway arbiter
- 25 Standard
- 26 Closeted secret
- 28 Laborious
- 30 "— was saying, ..."
- 31 Badge earners' org.
- 33 Give the once-over
- 34 Sticky stuff
- 39 Basic assumption
- 41 Family member
- 42 Springsteen nickname
- 43 Toyota subcompact
- 45 Three-piece
- 47 Swamp
- 48 Tumults
- 49 TV chef Martin
- 51 Ms. Gardner
- 53 Forty winks

Answer to Previous Puzzle



I-15 CRYPTOQUIP

GTWY NZLWZYW J WZLWN
EIPP EISKYF DTW GKDYWS.
K FIWNN TW VZIEP JW

XWXYW KY XRYIRS.
Yesterday's Cryptquip: SHE STARTED TO TELL HER FRIEND A TALE ABOUT A NOOSE, BUT THEN LEFT HER HANGING.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: X equals J

Confession screws up marriage

Dear Abby: About a year ago, a dear friend from childhood passed away. He was only 48. My friend, "Brian," and I attended his funeral. The sad event made me realize how short our lives are. On the drive home, Brian started asking me about my past — the people I grew up with, went to school with, etc. I was so caught up in my feelings I thought this was the time to finally answer all of his questions, because I was feeling so grateful for him, our kids and our life.

Well, I told my husband too much. He asked me about my past romantic relationships, and I answered him honestly.

Finally he said, "Since you are being so honest, I'm going to give you one more chance to tell all. If there is anything left to tell, say it now, and we will never have this conversation again."

Ted had an affair more than 20 years ago — we have been married more than 30 years —

and I confessed. It only happened once.

Abby, Brian hit the roof! My life hasn't been the same since. Brian feels he has been disrespected, and he wants to kill the other man. He has become insecure. Our marriage is now terrible.

Bottom line: Don't tell your secrets. Keep them buried deep.

Dear Duper: Although the affair was over many years ago, your husband is reacting the way he is because, for him, hurt and betrayal are fresh. Of course he feels insecure.

Many men feel that a woman who will cheat once won't hesitate to cheat again — and in some cases, that's true.

If you value your marriage, rather than claming up, you will drag your husband to a marriage counselor as soon as possible. You two have a lot of talking to each other to do.

Dear Abby



Husband renews contact with ex

Dear Annie: Last year, while recuperating from surgery, my husband, "Ted," had six months of free time, so he started looking up old friends on the Internet. He e-mailed one woman who unbeknownst to me was a former girlfriend. The more her name came up in conversation, the more concerned I became. I finally looked at their correspondence.

The first letters were innocent stories about kids and daily stuff, but she soon moved into remembrances and hints of wanting more, and Ted just stopped her. They both just turned 60.

On the surface, Ted and I were having fun, traveling and enjoying great sex, yet the e-mails became more and more intimate. I noticed her phone number appearing on our cell phone bill. Then I discovered Ted visited her while I was out of town taking care of my sick father. I confronted Ted, and he immediately apologized. Ted sent one last e-mail, telling her I was not

Annie's Mailbox



comfortable with their contact. For a while, I was well, but then I got suspicious. I checked his e-mail, and sure enough, he had initiated contact with her again. Now, they e-mail once a week.

How can I save our relationship?

Really Sad in California

Dear Really Sad: You need counseling. Tell Ted, "Honey, I've noticed you seem unhappy and distracted, and I'm having some trust issues about your ex-girlfriend. I think we could use some professional help. Please come with me."

Dear Annie: I agree with your advice to "Worried about Mom," whose mother has breast cancer, and Dad doesn't want her to leave the house. I am a breast cancer survivor. "Worried" says Mom is fairly active and healthy. She is absolutely correct to think it will depress

Dear Abby: We recently went to a birthday party for our 1-year-old granddaughter. The parents had a large gathering with lots of adults and six other small children. It was a success.

The birthday gifts were not opened until all the guests had left. Our daughter-in-law said she wanted to be able to keep track of who each present was from so she could write thank-you notes. However, I feel the guests should have been able to see our granddaughter's expression when she saw her gifts. Please give me your thoughts on this.

Miffed in Minnesota
Dear Miffed: At 1 year of age, a child is more interested in the wrapping paper and the box than what came inside it. Since you felt cheated at not being able to see what the other guests brought, perhaps the mother will allow you to help with the thank-you notes.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at: <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby>
Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

EXIDO

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CASEE

UPVERY

www.jumble.com

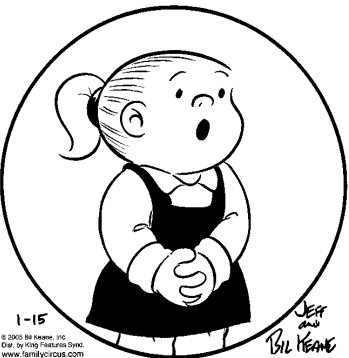
REVOUD

A:

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: OCCUR BLESS UNLESS VARIED
Answer: When the retiree returned to college, he was placed in the — "SENIOR" CLASS

Family Circus



"That no-call list won't stop Grandma from calling us, will it?"

GRAFFITI

BALANCED DIET: WHEN YOUR GROCERIES EQUAL YOUR PAYCHECK

ME 3/15

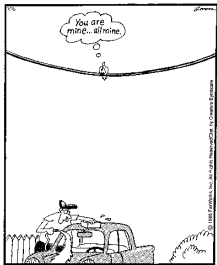
Dennis the Menace



© Gary Larson

The Far Side

"NO NEED TO READ A BOOK. MOM, I'LL JUST LISTEN MYSELF TO SLEEP TONIGHT."



Non Sequitur

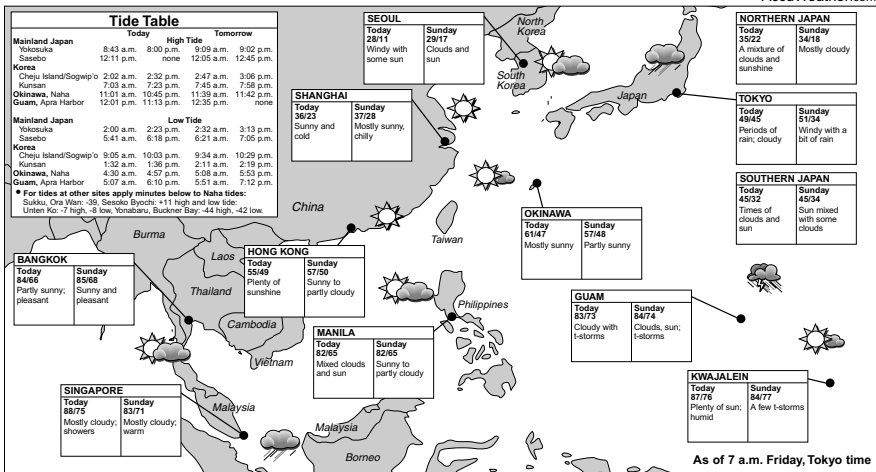


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The Pacific Forecast

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As of 7 a.m. Friday, Tokyo time

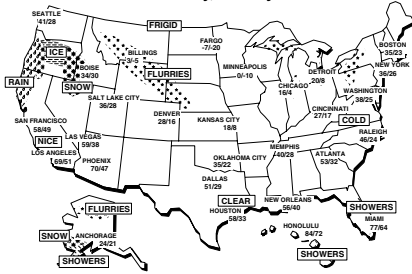
Extended Forecasts

TOKYO Monday: Partly sunny, high 44, low 31. Tuesday: Partly sunny, high 43, low 35.	KADENA Monday: Partly sunny, high 58, low 50. Tuesday: Partly sunny, high 61, low 52.	SEUL Monday: Partly sunny, high 31, low 12. Tuesday: Partly sunny, high 30, low 15.	MANILA Monday: Partly sunny, high 80, low 63. Tuesday: Partly sunny, high 81, low 65.	HAGATNA Monday: Thunderstorms, high 86, low 75. Tuesday: Mostly cloudy, high 85, low 74.
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Thursday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Albuquerque	48/22	Los Angeles	67/47	San Francisco	58/49
Amarillo	49/21	Little Rock	56/27	Las Vegas	59/30
Anchorage	6/5	Louisville	68/28	Phoenix	65/44
Ashville	64/53	Miami	81/73	Pittsburgh	68/28
Baltimore	65/52	Milwaukee	34/3	Portland, OR	42/30
Birmingham	69/40	Nashville	67/31	Portland, ME	45/42
Bismarck	-8/24	New York	57/55	Salt Lake City	38/20
Boise	40/20	Omaha	13/4	St. Louis	39/14
Boston	53/49	Orlando	85/66	San Antonio	62/30
Brownsville	73/40	Philadelphia	66/57	San Diego	66/48
Buffalo	67/25	Phoenix	65/44	San Juan	84/67
Burlington	59/36	Pittsburgh	68/28	Tampa	83/67
Charleston, SC	77/62	Portland, OR	42/30	Tulsa	46/12
Charlotte	76/58	Portland, ME	45/42	Washington	70/52
Cleveland	67/27	Salt Lake City	38/20	Wichita	38/12
Columbus, OH	67/26	St. Louis	39/14		
Duluth	5/18	San Antonio	62/30		
El Paso	53/28	San Diego	66/48		
Hartford	52/49	San Juan	84/67		
Helena	-4/8	Tampa	83/67		
Indianapolis	54/16	Tulsa	46/12		
Jacksonville	80/65	Washington	70/52		
Kansas City	29/0	Wichita	38/12		

Saturday, January 15



U.S. Extended Forecast

A storm will bring a bit of rain to a northern system that will weaken as it moves inland, sparing Southern California from any additional rain Saturday. However, enough moisture will stream into the Rockies to trigger some snow showers over the mountains. Flurries will fly in western Kansas and Nebraska. Meanwhile, a large arctic high pressure will continue to chill most of the eastern two-thirds of the nation. Temperatures will remain below zero from northeastern Montana to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Showers will dampen Florida and the extreme Southeast coast. The cold will persist in the East on Sunday.

Saturday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	84/66	Iwakuni	48/34	Sasebo	45/34
Beijing	32/16	Kadena AB	61/47	Sapporo	35/22
Camp Casey	77/59	Kunsan AB	33/18	Seoul	28/11
Chitose	26/9	Kwajalein	87/76	Shanghai	36/23
Diego Garcia	86/77	Manila	82/65	Singapore	88/75
Hagatna	83/73	Masawa AB	34/21	Sydney	90/69
Hanoi	60/50	Osan	29/9	Taegu	39/21
Hong Kong	55/49	Perth	83/63	Taipei	57/43
Honolulu	84/72	Pusan	40/24	Tokyo	49/45

Saturday's World Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Buenos Aires	69/71	Budapest	32/18	Kabul	84/65
Cairo	64/42	Kiev	22/12	New Delhi	72/41
Cancun	78/63	London	65/45	Oslo	29/23
Cape Town	82/66	Madrid	49/43	Paris	44/37
Geneva	44/36	Mexico City	54/43	Rio de Janeiro	82/75
Istanbul	41/31	Montreal	68/46	Rome	45/32
Jerusalem	59/46	Mogadishu	24/7	St. Petersburg	25/18
Johannesburg	30/18	Moscow	91/74	Stockholm	28/22
				Warsaw	23/17



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Indy poised to pass a tough test

By Dave Goldberg
The Associated Press

For a team that's lost five straight times to its upcoming opponent, the Indianapolis Colts are getting a lot of respect.

The opponent in question, of course, is New England, which has won two of the past three NFL titles. And the game in question is Sunday in Foxboro, where the Patriots beat the Colts in last season's AFC championship game and again in this season's opener.

Nonetheless, the Patriots are favored by just 2½ points, less than the three points a team normally gets for being at home.

Next to Pittsburgh, the Colts are the NFL's hottest team and MVP Peyton Manning is the NFL's hottest quarterback.

Indy has won nine of 10, the only loss being the final regular-season game in Denver in which it played backups. The Colts took care of that loss at home last week, dispatching the Broncos from the playoffs 49-24 in a game they led 35-3 at halftime.

That season opener, a 27-24 victory by the Patriots, is part of the reason why the game is outside in the cold New England winter.

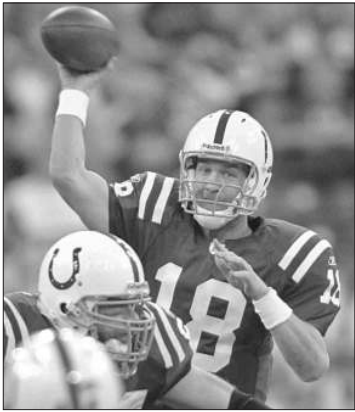
"When we lost that game up there, we felt it would probably cost us a chance to play a home game," said Colts coach Tony Dungy. "That's what we have now."

That clearly should slow down Manning.

Of his record 49 touchdown passes, 32 were indoors — 26 at home and six more at Detroit's Ford Field. In last year's title game, he threw four interceptions and he had another in the opener — picked off in the end zone on Indy's opening drive by Tedy Bruschi.

But he has one potential advantage here.

Ty Law, New England's best cornerback, has finally been declared out for the season, joining



Peyton Manning (18) is eager to make amends for last year's four-interception performance at New England in the AFC championship game.

Tyrone Poole, the other starter on the sideline. No team overcomes injuries better than the Patriots — last year, this year, every year. But ...

COLTS, 27-24.

Minnesota (plus 9) at Philadelphia: All of Eagles' fans jumped off the bandwagon when Terrell Owens was hurt and more hung their heads when Andy Reid nuked the last two regular-season games, playing subs after his team had clinched home-field advantage in the NFC.

Yes, the Vikings can be dangerous even with a sore ankle. Randy Moss caught two touchdowns passes last week.

But give Reid the benefit of the doubt. Even without Owens, the Eagles have a healthy Brian Westbrook, whose absence from last year's playoffs deprived Philadelphia of what was then its only game-breaking player. ... **EAGLES, 31-21.**

New York Jets (plus 9) at Pittsburgh: The Jets are better than their reputation, which has been sullied somewhat by the New York media, which decided to ignore the fact that the 5-6 record to finish the regular season was due in large part to Chad Pennington's shoulder injury.

Pennington looked fine last week in New York's overtime win in San Diego — certainly better than he did in a 17-6 loss in Pittsburgh on Dec. 12 when he was playing hurt.

But the Steelers are rested and couldn't even lose when they tried — they won their 14th straight playing subs in Buffalo against a team that would have made the playoffs had it won.

Probably closer than the spread but ... **STEELERS, 24-18.**

St. Louis (plus 7) at Atlanta: The Rams insist they're playing their best now and they seem to be — they beat the Jets at home in the regular-season finale and won in Seattle last week.

They also get the indoor fast track they like at the Georgia Dome, where they lost 34-17 in the second week of the season.

But they are just 3-6 on the road this season. Two of the wins were over the inconsistent Seahawks and the other was against San Francisco, easily the NFL's worst team this season.

And whatever the fast track does for the Rams, it also does a lot for Michael Vick, who ran for 109 yards and was 14 of 19 for 179 yards in the first meeting. ... **FALCONS, 33-24.**

Last week: 2-2 (spread, 1-3 (straight up))

McNabb prefers playoff pressure

By Rob Maaddi
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Donovan McNabb peeked into the interview room as Brian Westbrook approached the podium, and shouted three questions.

"What are you going to do without T.O.? Are you going to get the ball more? What's the mood of the team?" McNabb said in a squeaky, high-pitched tone, drawing laughter from the crowd.

Tired of hearing those questions himself, the Philadelphia Eagles' five-time Pro Bowl quarterback intercepted some humor into a mundane Wednesday news conference. McNabb brings the same lighthearted spirit into the locker room and the huddle.

Pressure? What pressure? McNabb certainly isn't feeling any as the heavily favored Eagles (13-3) prepare to play the Minnesota Vikings (9-8) in an NFC divisional playoff game on Sunday.

With star receiver Terrell Owens sidelined by an ankle injury, McNabb realizes the burden of carrying the offense falls on him. He welcomes the challenge.

"You guys said I don't have pressure off of me. Now I guess I have all the pressure again," McNabb said. "I love pressure. I love to step out there and everybody is standing on their feet with their mouth wide open to find out what I'm going to do next. ... Buckle your seat belts and enjoy the ride." McNabb is coming off the best season of his six-year career. He set a team record with 3,875 yards passing, became the first NFL quarterback to throw for more than 30 touchdowns (31) and less than 10 interceptions (eight), and his passer rating of 104.7 was second in the NFL.

Often criticized for being inaccurate, McNabb drastically improved his completion percentage — his 64.0 percent was almost six points higher than his career average — and broke an NFL record by completing 24 consecutive passes over two games.

None of the personal glory matters if the Eagles don't win the Super Bowl. After losing the past three NFC championship games, nothing else is considered a success in a city that hasn't celebrated a winner since the 76ers won the NBA title in 1983.

"In the world that we live in, you're not great unless you win a Super Bowl," McNabb said. "It's sad that you have to be judged by that, but we just have to play our game and know what we're seeing and go out and execute."

With Owens joining McNabb and Westbrook this season, the offense nearly was unstoppable in



Minnesota Vikings at Eagles

3 a.m. Monday
AFN-Pacific/Korea, Atlantic, AFN radio Okinawa, Korea

Game time is Japan and Korea Standard. Guam is one hour ahead; Singapore and Hong Kong are one hour behind.

the first 12 games. The Eagles won nine of the first dozen games by double-digit margins, including five wins by at least 21 points.

Owens' injury was a devastating blow for Philadelphia, which lost both of the games without the Pro Bowl wideout, mainly because many of the starters were rested with nothing on the line.

But the Eagles don't have Owens, who has an outside chance of playing in the Super Bowl if Philly gets there, when they went to the past three conference title games. McNabb and Westbrook are playing their best, and the defense has been outstanding this season.

"We have more weapons than just T.O.," McNabb said, referring to wideouts Todd Pinkston and Freddie Mitchell and tight ends Chad Lewis and L.J. Smith.

"I know you guys have questions about the receiving corps since T.O. is hurt. Our receiving corps is the best in the league and we'll win the game."

Westbrook, so valuable that coach Andy Reid sat him out the last two regular-season games, figures to draw most of the attention from Minnesota's defense.

"They still have to respect the other guys on this team," Westbrook said.

Throughout his career, McNabb has earned respect for his leadership skills and the way he has handled adversity, beginning with being booed loudly by Eagles fans when his name was announced as the No. 2 pick of the 1999 NFL Draft.

In 2002, McNabb threw four TD passes on a broken ankle against Arizona, then sat out the last six regular-season games.

He overcame the worst start of his career last season, playing with a sprained right thumb that affected his grip, and an ankle injury that limited his mobility. He was booed by fans, and also dealt with the racially charged critique of then-EAGLES cornerback Rashad Lewis, who said McNabb was overrated because the media wanted to see a black quarterback succeed.

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Injury could keep Agassi out of Open

BY JOHN PYTE

The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Andre Agassi might be forced to join the growing list of high-profile absences from the Australian Open after injuring his hip in an exhibition tournament.

"It's a mighty big spectrum of possibilities right now," said Agassi, a four-time Australian Open champion, who was trailing Andy Roddick 6-5 in his Kooyung Classic match when he retired Thursday.

Agassi said he felt tightness in the muscle at the front of his right hip and would have an MRI to determine the damage.

The good news is that it didn't hurt, it was tightening up and that can be your body protecting itself, which is hopefully more of the issue," Agassi said. "That wasn't comfortable out there at all, what I was feeling I have to wait and see what I'm dealing with — it's a pretty scary feeling out there when something doesn't feel right and is getting worse. It's very disappointing, and I'll have to do my best to deal with it."

Roddick will face the winner of Friday's semifinal between Andre Agassi and Roger Federer and Tim Henman.

In playoffs for 5th-8th place Thursday, defending champion David Nalbandian bested fellow Argentine Gaston Gaudio 6-1, 6-3, and Olympic gold medalist Nicolas Pietrangeli 6-4, 6-4.

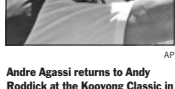
While Agassi's attendance at the Australian Open is only in doubt, former Wimbledon and U.S. Open finalist Mark Philippoussis pulled out of it because of an adductor muscle problem that forced him out of the recent Hopman Cup.

The Open women's draw has also been depleted by injuries.

Defending champion Justine Henin-Hardenne pulled out last week because a knee problem and her fellow Belgian Kim Clijsters was ruled out with persistent wrist pain. Jennifer Capriati, a two-time winner, withdrew Wednesday because of a recurring right shoulder injury.

Top-seeded Lindsay Davenport had to forfeit her quarterfinal match against Australia's Samantha Stosur in the Sydney International on Thursday due to bronchitis, 10 days after she withdrew from the Hopman Cup to give her injured knee extra time to heal.

Agassi hasn't ruled himself out, just yet.



Andre Agassi returns to Andy Roddick at the Kooyung Classic in Melbourne, Australia, on Thursday. Agassi later withdrew.

"I was not counting on this being the end of the day for me," he said. "Maybe in a few days I'll have a much better sense of what my hopes will be."

On Wednesday, the 34-year-old Agassi said he felt he was in top physical condition for the Open and was hoping to "have some magical things happen."

He said he'd trimmed down about 163 pounds from about 176 after concentrating on fitness instead of tennis technique in the offseason.

Despite all the conditioning, Agassi said he first felt pain in his hip midway through the first set, and briefly approached the umpire's chair in the 10th game.

"I got to a point where it wasn't doing anybody any good for me to stay out there. It was a difficult decision, but a clear one," Agassi said. "I have been thinking about it before — enough to know that it was only getting worse."

MLB: Critic deems new plan 'Band-Aid', disingenuous

MLB, FROM BACK PAGE

"Not only is this good for the game and for the sport in general, but professional athletes are role models to millions of youth and aspiring athletes across the country," Thompson said. "And this step shows that the long-term health consequences do not outweigh any short-term gain."

In addition to a mandatory test each season, players randomly will be selected for additional tests, with no limit on how many times a player may be tested. For the first time, players will be subject to random tests during the off-season. In addition, diuretics and many steroid precursors were added to the banned list.

However, Dr. Gary Wadler of the World Anti-Doping Agency called the new policy "somewhat disingenuous" and "a Band-Aid." "There is some movement," he said. "It's not all public relations, but a lot of it is public relations, and we'll have to see the details."

As in the previous deal, a player who tests positive will be targeted for more tests along with those who within the previous 12 months give a joint management-union panel reason to determine there is "reasonable cause." Wadler specifically criticized the failure to address amphetamines, which many in baseball consider to be a far greater problem than steroids.

"The amphetamines, better known as 'greenies,' have a long tradi-

tion in baseball," Wadler said. "Clearly they have been demonstrated in classic studies to be performance enhancing, to be a controlled substance in the United States, to have very limited therapeutic value. For them not to ban it raises questions as to the process by which they derived the [banned] list. So that disturbs me in great measure."

The issue of amphetamines came up during the talks between owners and players, said Rob Manfred, management's chief labor negotiator.

"Our focus, as Don said, was really performance-enhancing substances in terms of muscle building," Manfred said.

Human growth hormone was added to a widened list of banned substances, but it will be found only when science determines a way to detect it in urine samples. "It's not a blood test, but only in blood, which will not be conducted in baseball."

The agreement was approved by owners Thursday but still must be voted on by players.

Selig would not address what action baseball would take, if any, against players who have been found to be using steroids in the past. Baseball officials have said repeatedly they didn't plan to penalize players for admissions of use prior to September 2002, when the initial agreement took effect.

Associated Press Writers Ronald Blum and Jeff Zeleny in St. Louis, and Washington and Jimmy Goin in Boston contributed to this report.

Heisman winner Leinart delays NFL decision

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Heisman Trophy winner Matt Leinart has delayed announcing whether he will return to Southern California for his senior season or turn pro, saying he will reveal his plans Friday. "I need an extra day to continue gathering information," the USC quarterback said Thursday. "It's very disappointing, and I'll have to do my best to deal with it."

The NFL deadline for underclassmen to declare for the draft is Saturday.

Two other USC juniors, linebacker Lofa Tatupu and punter Tom Malone, also are expected to say Friday whether they will enter the draft.

Leinart, 21, obviously is having a difficult time deciding.

Early this week he said he has sometimes changed his mind almost hourly.

The redshirt junior and the Trojans didn't play their final game of the season until Jan. 4, when he threw an Orange Bowl record five touchdown passes in a 55-19 win over Oklahoma that gave USC a second consecutive national title.

The 11 days between that game and the NFL deadline hasn't given him much time to weigh his options.

He has consulted with coaches, friends, teammates, NFL quarterbacks Carson Palmer and Ben Roethlisberger and — mostly informally, Leinart said — his own parents.

Sports briefs

"There's just so much stuff. It's almost like I learn something new every day, so it makes the decision a lot harder when you find out new information," Leinart said. "If I declare for the draft, then you have to think of every possible thing. You've got to think of what other quarterbacks are going, like where do you want to train."

Jason Williams joins CBA

NAMPA, Idaho — Jason Williams, who was so happy to be playing basketball again that he was as generous with his handshakes, hugs and thank-yous as he once was with his cynical one-liners.

Hoping to return to the NBA, Williams began his comeback bid Wednesday night by scoring two points and grabbing four rebounds in limited action just hours after signing a contract with the Idaho Stampede of the Continental Basketball Association.

Williams, who faces reckless manslaughter charges related to a 2002 shooting at his New Jersey mansion, has said he hopes to use the CBA as a springboard for his return to the NBA.

Williams, who turns 37 next month, quit professional basketball in 2000 because of knee problems.

The 6-foot-10 forward did not start Wednesday's game against

the Yakima Sun Kings, but was the first man off the bench in both halves of Idaho's 117-109 win, playing more than nine minutes. He drew a polite cheer from the announced crowd of 2,367 when he first took the floor about midway through the first quarter.

"I felt great. I really appreciated it. I was a little rusty," Williams said after the game. "I'm glad we got a win. These guys have been great."

Williams was acquitted in April of aggravated manslaughter in the Feb. 14, 2002, shooting death of a 19-year-old driver, Costas "Gus" Christoff. He was convicted on four counts stemming from a failed bid to conceal the shooting. His retrial on a charge of reckless manslaughter is due to begin in March.

Williams, who called the shooting an accident, won't be sentenced on the four counts of reckless manslaughter until the remaining charge is settled. Possible sentences run from probation to about five years in prison. The reckless manslaughter charge carries a possible 10-year sentence.

Mondesi says he's got one-year contract with Braves

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic — Raul Mondesi said he has agreed to terms with the Atlanta Braves on a one-year contract.

Mondesi told The Associated Press that he will earn \$1 million, and that the deal includes perfor-

mance bonuses that could bring the total value up to \$1.7 million.

"I will travel to Atlanta tonight to take a physical early Friday, right the deal will be official afterward," Mondesi said Thursday.

According to Braves spokesman Brad Hainje, assistant general manager Frank Thomas said Mondesi's claim was true.

"We don't have any news on Mondesi," Hainje said. "There are rumors, but we haven't been talking to I don't know if Mondesi is one of them."

He has not signed with us, and we have no plans for an announcement today."

Mondesi said he chose Atlanta over Baltimore because the Braves offered him the starting right fielder position. He was opened when J.D. Drew signed a \$55 million, five-year contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"The Orioles offered me more money, but they didn't guarantee a regular spot on the team," Mondesi said. "I'm still a young man that can do many things on the field."

Mondesi, 33, hit 241 with three home runs and 15 RBIs in 34 games with the Pittsburgh Pirates and Anaheim Angels last season, when he was shadowed by off-the-field trouble.

Baylor's Smith to coach U.S. baseball team

DURHAM, N.C. — Baylor coach Steve Smith was chosen baseball coach of the national

team that will represent the United States this summer.

Smith, an assistant for the 1998 USA national team, will coach a team of college freshmen and sophomores scheduled to compete in Japan and Taiwan.

Smith is 372-241-1 at Baylor. He has led the team to two NCAA Super Regional appearances and the 2000 Big 12 Conference title.

NASCAR changes qualifying

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — NASCAR revamped its qualifying procedures on Thursday, guaranteeing a spot in the next race to the top 35 drivers in the points standings.

The next seven positions in the starting field will be awarded to drivers with the fastest qualifying speeds who are not among the top 35 in points. The 43rd and final starting position will still be reserved for a current or past Nextel Cup champion.

The system eliminates the old procedure of teams securing provisional positions throughout the season to gain entry into the starting fields. If a driver didn't qualify in the top 35 on Thursday, he had to rely on his provisional to get in.

When the provisionals ran out, the driver was sent home for the weekend, leaving his position in the points standings.

The new qualifying system will not begin until the sixth race of the season, the Texas Motor Speedway race, the top 35 in the standings of the 2004 points system will be assured a starting spot.

Suns run 10-0 in game 10 to record 11-0 in 10th round of NBA playoffs

The Associated Press

The Phoenix Suns were on the losing end of a game for the fifth time this season.

After falling behind by 14 points early, the Utah Jazz rallied for their second straight home win over one of the top teams in the Western Conference with a 115-108 victory over Phoenix on Wednesday night.

The loss was the Suns' first since Dec. 28 at San Antonio, ending their run of seven consecutive victories and dropping their NBA-best record to 31-5.

"I don't think we had the same energy," Suns forward Shamon Martin said. "We came out of the gates on fire tonight and I think we just relaxed a little bit. And as soon as we relaxed, they became the aggressors and they started getting all the calls."

Utah's bench and rebounding were the Suns, who beat Miami 122-107 the previous night. Utah's reserves outscored the Suns' 67-6, and the Jazz won the rebounding battle 55-45.

Mehmet Okur, whose last-second offensive rebound and putback gave Utah a 97-96 win over San Antonio on Monday night, finished with 21 points and 17 rebounds, 10 on the offensive glass.

After losing nine straight, the Jazz have won two in a row over teams with the top two records in the West.

"Those are signs of what we can do and those are signs of the team that we have if we do the right thing," said Raja Bell, who scored 19 points of his own team after missing five games with inflammation in his right knee.

NBA roundup

Phoenix was able to run at will early, but the Jazz took control in the second quarter and held off everything the Suns had down the stretch.

Amare Stoudemire led the Suns with 32.5 free throw to the margin to 110-100, but Utah came right back with a three-point play by the 7-foot Okur.

Raptors 104, Celtics 93: Morris Peterson made three free throws and scored a career-high 37 points for the Raptors.

Chris Bosh added a career-high 26 points and 10 rebounds for Toronto, 6-6 since trading Vince Carter to New Jersey on Dec 17.

Paul Pierce had 23 points for the Celtics, who have lost seven straight road games.

Wizards 104, Trail Blazers 100: At Washington, Gilbert Arenas made a floating runner with 24 seconds left, then stole an inbound pass and converted it into a breakaway dunk.

The lead changed hands four times in the final 70 seconds, with the Trail Blazers nearly pulling off the win after coming back from a 13-point fourth-quarter deficit. Arenas' floaty put the Wizards ahead for good, and his dunk made the score 101-98.

Pistons 90, Hornets 76: At Auburn Hills, Mich., Ben Wallace had a season-high 19 rebounds and added 11 points to help Detroit snap New Orleans' two-game winning streak.

Chauncey Billups scored 25 points for Detroit, and Richard Hamilton had 20 points and a season-high 10 assists.

Magic 87, Timberwolves 80: Hedo Turkoglu scored 26 points and Grant Hill added 20 to help Orlando snap a seven-game road losing streak.

Kevin Garnett matched his career high with 25 rebounds and had 19 points for Minnesota. The Timberwolves have lost three straight and 11 of 15.

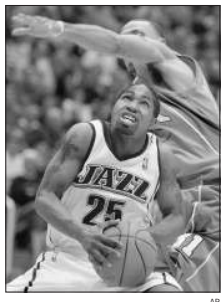
Bulls 110, 76ers 78: At Chicago, Ben Gordon matched a career high with 31 points, and Eddy Curry added 24 in the surging Bulls' fifth straight victory.

With two five-game winning streaks in the past month, the Bulls have won 11 of their past 14 to move within three games of .500 after losing their first nine games.

Spurs 94, Bucks 79: Tim Duncan scored 21 points, and Tony Parker had 20 to lead the Spurs to their fourth victory in five games. Michael Redd led visiting Milwaukee with 24 points.

Rockets 124, Mavericks 114: Tracy McGrady scored 30 points and matched his season high with 11 assists, helping visiting Houston end the Mavericks' six-game winning streak. Juwan Howard scored 20 points in 14-for-19 shooting, David Wesley had 21, and Yao Ming scored 20 points, half from the foul line.

Nuggets 95, Lakers 83: At Denver, Carmelo Anthony had his best shooting night in the past month, the Bulls have won 11 of their past 14 to move within three games of .500 after losing their first nine games.



Jazz guard Keith McLeod (25) slips under the arm of Suns forward Shamon Martin (31) during the fourth quarter.

Clippers 103, SuperSonics 92: At Los Angeles, Conroy Maggette had 31 points and 10 rebounds and Derrick Martin made three clutch outside shots in the final 2:21.

Heat 98, Warriors 91: At Oakland, Shaquille O'Neal had 26 points and 12 rebounds, and Miami avoided its first three-game losing streak of the season.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
New York	17	48%	61
Philadelphia	15	44%	59
Pittsburgh	15	41%	59
New Jersey	12	33%	43

Southeast Division			
Miami	28	70%	79
Orlando	19	53%	71
Atlanta	16	38%	59
Cleveland	12	36%	41
Chicago	10	28%	35
Indiana	10	25%	35

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
San Antonio	22	55%	61
Dallas	17	42%	55
San Antonio	18	50%	59
New Orleans	18	45%	59

Northwest Division			
Seattle	17	73%	68
Portland	15	45%	55
Utah	13	31%	43

Pacific Division			
Phoenix	31	86%	77
Golden State	18	45%	51
Lakers	18	45%	51
Golden State	15	36%	20

Midwest Division			
Toronto	10	25%	35
Indiana	10	25%	35
Detroit	10	25%	35
Chicago	10	25%	35
San Antonio	10	25%	35
Golden State	10	25%	35

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Jazz 115, Suns 108

PHOENIX — Richardson 15-17 24, Marion 6-11 6-20,

SPORTS

MLB cracks down on steroids

New plan includes suspensions for first offense, more random testing

By BOB BAUM
The Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — With some of its biggest stars under suspicion and lawmakers demanding action, Major League Baseball adopted a tougher steroid-testing program that will suspend first-time offenders for 10 days and randomly test players year-round.

The agreement was hailed by baseball management and its union Thursday as a huge step forward but was criticized by some as not going far enough because the penalties are less harsh than those in Olympic sports and amphetamines were not banned.

"I've been saying for some time that my goal for this industry is zero tolerance regarding steroids," commissioner Bud Selig said.

A first positive test would result in a penalty of 10 days, a second positive test in a 30-day ban, a third positive in a 60-day penalty, and a fourth positive test in a one-year ban, all without pay. A player who tests positive a fifth time would be subject to discipline determined by the commissioner.

Under the previous agreement, a first positive test resulted only in treatment, and a second positive test was subject to a 15-day suspension. Only with a fifth positive test would a player subject to a one-year ban.

No player was suspended for steroid use in 2004, the first season of testing with penalties.

"We're acting today to help restore the confidence of our fans," Selig said.

Since the old agreement was reached in

2002, baseball has come under increased scrutiny about steroids.

Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi and Gary Sheffield testified before a federal grand jury investigating the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative known as BALCO. President Bush mentioned the steroid problem in last year's State of the Union address.

"I will be surprised if over time this doesn't take care of the problem virtually completely," union head Donald Fehr said, speaking by telephone from Los Angeles.

Said St. Louis Cardinals manager Tony La Russa: "I just hope it's the Cadillac of all policies because that's what major league baseball needs. There's no doubt we have a problem."

The old deal wasn't due to expire until December 2006, but the union took the rare step of renegotiating a major section

Jazz rally from 14 down to knock off Suns, Page 31

of its labor contract and reached an agreement relatively quickly. The new rules run until December 2008.

"It appears to be a significant breakthrough," Sen. John McCain, who had threatened baseball with legislation, said in Washington. "I do believe this is significant progress."

McCain said that in light of the deal, he did not think legislation was necessary, though he would have preferred a 10- to 15-game suspension for a first offense and a permanent ban for multiple positive tests.

"I would have liked to see amphetamines added to this list," McCain said.

Tommy Thompson, the U.S. health and human services secretary, commended players and owners.

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Tar Heels sting Georgia Tech



North Carolina's C.J. Hooker, front, and Georgia Tech's Anthony Morrow battle Wednesday at the Dean Smith Center in Chapel Hill, N.C. No. 3 North Carolina defeated No. 8 Georgia Tech 91-69. The top three teams in The Associated Press Top 25 poll all won. See story on Page 26.



Colts getting lots of respect against nemesis New England

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Hip injury could keep Agassi out of Australian Open

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